# THE ŚAIVA SCHOOL OF HINDUISM

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*by*

S. SHIVAPADASUNDARAM, B.A.

*Emeritus Principal, Victoria College,*
*Chulipuram, Ceylon*

WITH A PREFACE BY

J. S. MACKENZIE, LITT.D., LL.D.

*Emeritus Professor in University College,*
*Cardiff*

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TO

THE HONOURED MEMORY OF

SIR P. RĀMANĀTHAN, Kt.

Scholar, Statesman, and Sage

# PREFACE

The author of this book, whom I had the pleasure of meeting some years ago when I was staying at the Rāmanāthan College in Ceylon, has asked me to write some prefatory words by way of introduction to English readers. It does not seem to me to call for much in that way. "Good wine needs no bush"; but even the best of wines are apt to differ a little in their flavour. Good philosophy, in like manner, is apt to carry a certain flavour belonging to the country of its origin and even to the particular school of thought to which its author belongs. The present work professes to be an exposition of the Śaiva School of Hinduism; and it seems to be an eminently clear exposition. It is mainly ethical; and, though the ideas on which special emphasis is laid may sometimes seem a little unfamiliar to Western readers, I think it will be found that this lack of familiarity is an advantage rather than otherwise; just as most of us have found it an advantage to have ethical ideas presented to us in ways that are specially characteristic of Hebrew, Greek, Latin, French, or other foreign nationalities. I think it will be found that this is eminently true with regard to the present book; and, of course, it is specially desirable that English readers should endeavour to gain some familiarity with the modes of thought and expression that are characteristic of those Eastern countries with which our own has long been wound by very special ties. I am certainly not acquainted with any book that seems

to me to be better adapted to contribute to this desirable end than the present one; and I beg to recommend it very heartily to all who are interested in ethical thought, and especially in the ethical thought of India.

J. S. MACKENZIE

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# INTRODUCTION

Hinduism is a group of religions which accept the authority of the Vedas. Each member of the group has an authority of its own, which the Vedas supplement, and in the light of which they are interpreted.

The most important members of this group are Śaivaism, Vaishnavaism, and Shaktaism, whose additional authorities are respectively the Śiva Agamas, the Pancharatra, and the Shakta Agamas. They derive their names from Śiva, Vishnu, and Shakti. In spite of their akinness, they differ widely in their philosophy and ceremonials. Of these three religions, Śaivaism has the largest number of followers both in India and in Ceylon. In its orthodox form it is found in South India, Ceylon, Kashmeer, and Nepal. Shaktaism is concentrated in Bengal, the capital of which, Calcutta, is named after Kali, a name of Shakti.

As regards the age of Śaivaism, it is as difficult of discovery as the age of the multiplication table. The Śaiva religion as well as other philosophical religions contains truths which are discovered from time to time by men capable of finding them out. The truths of Śaivaism are discovered by Śiva Gnanis, who may appear in this world at any time. But it may be mentioned that reference is made to Śaivaism and to the Śivagamas in the Mahabharata, which is believed to have been written in the sixth century B.C. There seems to be archaeological evidence to show that there was Śiva worship in the Indus valley five

thousand years ago, though there is nothing to show that it was Agamic. Sir John Marshall, from the examination of the statuettes* found in the ruins of Mahenjo-daro, and his colleague, Dr. Pran Nath, from the inscriptions,† have, independent of each other, arrived at the conclusion that Śiva worship had been prevalent there.

The chief characteristic of the religions of India is the scientific basis of their philosophy and observances. Each religion starts with facts obtained from experience, and proceeds to build up its philosophy. Of these, Śaivaism, or Śaiva Siddhanta, as it is technically called, is pre-eminently scientific, and the most modern scientific theories of the West find their counterparts in it. The postulate of the Śaiva religion is the law of universal causation, which is the very foundation of Western science. Śaivaism is able to accept biological evolution, as it posits the evolution of the whole material universe and of the souls themselves. The Agamic meaning of the word "Maya" is that which involves and evolves, and that of "Linga," the Śaiva symbol of God, is that which causes involution and evolution.

* "Among the many revelations that Mahenjo-daro and Harappa have had in store for us, none perhaps is more remarkable than this discovery that Śaivaism has a history going back to the Chalcolithic age or perhaps even further still, and that it takes its place as the most ancient living faith in the world" (*Mahenjo-daro and the Indus Civilization*, Preface, p. vii).

† "The cults of Śiva and the mother-Goddess had already been shown to be very old. It is interesting to find them current as far back as 3000 B.C." (*The Scripts of the Indus Valley Seals*, p. 25).

In the region of ethics, Śaivaism naturally upholds determinism, regards wrongdoing as mere weakness, as something which deserves kind and sympathetic treatment instead of abhorrence or hatred. In psychology, Śaivaism has no place for faculties, but divides mental activities into cognition (Buddhi), volition (Ahankara), and apprehension (Manas). Coming to physics, it regards substances only as aggregates of qualities, and derives all mental and material products alike from the same three qualities, sentience, motion, and inertness, thus making mind and matter at bottom the same. Its conception of God is that of a Supreme Being which, far from being anthropomorphic or meddling with the universe from time to time, causes the evolution and the involution of the universe by means of agencies* in the universe itself, resembling in this respect the motion of the wheels and hands of a watch that had been wound. Religion is not regarded as an external authority based on revelations, but as an urge in living beings which leads them to their ultimate goal of perfection.

The word "religion" is used in this book as the equivalent of the word "Samaya," which literally means that which leads to union. In fact, almost all theistic religions profess to take their followers to God. Religion must therefore be a power, and not a lifeless bundle of doctrines and practices to be accepted or rejected according to the tastes of the follower. Śaivaism

* Like Kála and Niyati (see p. 81); wherever mention is made in this book of God's Love doing anything, it is as the ultimate agent and not as the immediate cause.

regards the Love of God as religion itself, because it alone has the power to take a soul to God. The word "religion," however, is commonly used in the sense of "Mata," i.e. doctrines. But mere doctrines are not of much consequence to the evolution of the soul, and the view that all religions are different paths to the ultimate goal is as untenable as the belief of the bigot that his religion alone can take a soul to God, since it is the capacity of the soul that counts and not the guidance given by books.

The authoritative works on Śaivaism are the twenty-eight Śivagamas, which are all in Sanskrit. The truths contained in these books are believed to have come to saintly persons by spiritual illumination. The style is so terse and the meaning so abstruse that the philosophical portions of these works could not be understood without extensive commentaries. A chapter* of the Raurava Ágama called Śiva Gnana Bodham, and consisting of twelve couplets, said to have been revealed to the great Śaiva saint, Nandi, as the essence of the Ágamas, was translated into Tamil in the twelfth century by Meikandar, who also added to it a commentary. This was expanded by his disciple Arulnandi in his Śiva Gnana Siddhiar. Śiva Gnana Munivar, a great scholar who lived in the latter part of the seventeenth century, wrote an extensive commentary on Śiva Gnana Bodham, which covers four hundred pages of folio in print. He and four others have written commentaries on Śiva Gnana Siddhiar.

* Twelfth chapter of the seventy-third section (Papa Vimochana Padalam) of the Agama.

There are also some original works in Tamil on Śaivaism, such as the Tirumantram of Tirumular, who is said to have flourished in the first century of the Christian era.

The present work is largely based on Śiva Gnana Bodham and Śiva Gnana Siddhiar. The Agamic method of proceeding from facts of experience* to general principles has been followed here as much as possible. The philosophical part of Śaivaism has found very little place in this book, as the purpose of this work is to present only that side of Śaivaism which has a direct bearing on daily life. An important omission is the exposition of the various theories regarding the relationship between God and soul, as to whether they are one or two or neither.

The first chapter of this book deals with Mata, and the second with Samaya. The third gives an outline of Śaivaism and is followed by seven chapters which give a more detailed account of it. The Law of Karma is often grossly misinterpreted, and an attempt is, therefore, made in the ninth chapter to do justice to it. Chapters eleven to fifteen are devoted to the practical side of religion. Of these, the eleventh chapter divides people into three classes according to their tendencies to do wrong, to do right, and to transcend the distinction of right and wrong. Chapters twelve to fourteen deal with aids to those of the second class. Those who belong to the third class are the real Śaivites, whose

* In Śaiva philosophy, experience includes yogic vision obtained by spiritual illumination, which may be regarded as a high type of intuition.

observances are given in the last chapter. Certain details, relating to worship, which ought to appear in the last two chapters, are taken away from them and given as appendices, since they are not likely to interest non-Śaivite readers.

# THE ŚAIVA SCHOOL OF HINDUISM

## CHAPTER I

## CONVENTIONAL RELIGION

*The conventional nature of religions—the claim of religions—the falsity of the claim—the failure of religions—the value of religions—the reform of religions*

### *The Conventional Nature of Religions*

There was a time when religion, in the sense of a creed, held undisputed sway over its followers, permeated their whole lives, and was all in all to them.

It was the mother of all institutions. The powers of the king, the laws of the land, marital and family ties, and social organization derived their sanction from religion. The head of the State bowed to the will of the head of the Church; emperors stood on bended knees before the Pope; and Vishnu, the protector of the Devas, is said to have stood trembling before the half-naked beggar sage, Dadeechi. Men braved death with ecstatic joy for the sake of religion. Nothing was prized so highly as religion. This was because the body was regarded merely as the abode of the soul, as something of no intrinsic value, and

worldly possessions as adjuncts of the valueless body. The soul was considered to be the only reality, and religion was supposed to be as valuable to the soul as air and food are to the body. Religion gave sustenance and strength to the soul, and illumined it. This was when there was a single religion in a country without a rival. But when other religions came with a similar claim to divine origin, but with more acceptable views, and impinged on it, it ceased to be supreme and its glory became a thing of the past.* Instead of religion giving life, strength, and illumination to man, it had to receive them from him. Human frailty worked on it and gave it a tragic expression. It often assumed a militant spirit and brought in its train all the ignoble concomitants of war. It sowed enmity and hatred instead of love and peace, contempt and distrust instead of respect and good will, hypocrisy and corruption instead of sincerity and honesty. The awakening of this spirit had had its repercussions on its internal working. Its benign influence was smothered and its power for good became negligibly small. Several other circumstances, both internal and external, such as formalism and commercialism, scientific scepticism and materialistic tendencies have also been at work sapping its vitality. Now it serves only as a label to mark out people, and that for no very good purpose. It has lost its claim to the name and retains it only by common consent. It has therefore become almost conventional. It is useful to find out how it met this

* The advent of Christianity, for instance, was a death-blow to Druidism in Britain.

fate and by what means it may be made a living force again.

### *The Claim of Religions*

Religions lay stress on two elements, doctrines and observances, and make extravagant claims regarding them. The authorship is attributed either to God or to a godly being. The doctrines relate to the self, the universe in which it is placed, its goal, and its master if any. The observances include forms of worship and rules of conduct. It is claimed by almost all religions that the doctrines are final and infallible truths, and that the observances lead to the highest conceivable happiness. The infallibility of the teachings and the effects of the observances are guaranteed by their divine origin. Few followers of a religion endeavour to examine the validity of these claims. The belief in them is instilled in childhood along with unquestioning love for it. This is strengthened by the faith displayed by other members of the community and is fed by the love implanted along with it. It becomes crystallized and its validity seems to be no more doubted than that of mathematical truths.

### *The Falsity of the Claim*

The belief in these claims has thus no substantial foundation, and the whole superstructure crumbles down under the impact of demonstrable truths. Those who do not by birth belong to a particular religion and have therefore not been inoculated with a belief

in it are unable to accept its claims. In order to silence the doubts felt by such strangers and inquirers, an attempt is made to raise religion to the level of a mystic philosophy, which is supposed to transcend not only science but also the method of scientific approach. A comparative study of any two religions is enough to make us see more clearly the intolerable nature of the claim for infallibility. Religions contradict one another on vital points. One religion says there is only one God, another says there are many, and a third says there is none. Again, one religion says that souls exist but have only one birth each, another says that souls undergo several births. These inconsistent teachings cannot all be truths, at least final truths.* Similarly, observances prescribed by different religions are diametrically opposed to one another. Some religions enjoin worship of idols; and some, of images; and others condemn the worship of both. Some insist on feasts on sacred days, others prohibit them and insist on fasts. Some divorce life from religion, others make it part of it. We know that of a number of inconsistent statements for any given purpose, all are false except one, and in some cases all are false without exception.

The priests and preachers of religions have admitted the fallibility of their religions in practice if not in theory. In this, like their religions, they occupy a

* The following are truths but not final truths: (1) the body is real, (2) the soul is real and has one birth, (3) the soul is real and has many births. These become false only when the reality of other things is denied.

false position. These men have thrown overboard fundamental doctrines of their religions, and have adopted fresh ones. There are Christian divines who, on account of the assaults of science, have given up long-cherished articles of the original creed, such as the Virgin Birth, the Resurrection, and the Atonement. They no longer regard the Gospels as trustworthy documents and have attempted to reconstruct the life of Jesus. Even the Roman Catholic Church, in spite of its greater orthodoxy, has entertained the idea of dethroning the Old Testament. The Vedic religion had flesh-eating thrust on it by the Shakta commentators of the Vedas, as has been shown conclusively by Swamy Dayanand. It accepted Buddha as an avathar of Vishnu in order to swallow Buddhism. Buddhism, in turn, took over the gods of the Vedic religion to catch the imagination of its followers. Such conduct on the part of the apostles of the various religions shows that their claim to infallibility is merely a pretence maintained for the sake of the effect that the theory of a divine origin undoubtedly has on the unreasoning crowd. The relinquishing of this claim would be followed by the relinquishing of the claim of divine origin.

If this is the true nature of their doctrines, their rituals and observances stand on still more insecure foundations. Of the observances, only some are religious; the others are really social. Regarding the social observances, opinion is divided as to whether they are an integral part of religion or only an adjunct of it. Those who regard them as part of religion

endeavour to follow them with varying degrees of success, while others set no special value on them and make no effort to adhere to them. But there was a time when religious ceremonies were carefully performed. The belief in their divine origin, coupled with the hope of reward or the fear of punishment, compelled adherence. Besides, the priest as the most learned man in the locality and as the intermediary between God and man commanded the highest respect. His influence also made itself felt in the observance of religious exercises. So these exercises became almost part of the custom of the community that professed them, and the thought of giving them up would not ordinarily occur to any one. But the earnestness and zeal with which these were observed depended upon the capacity and the character of individuals. Most people began with earnestness and devotion, but when the charm of novelty passed away the concomitant mental activity subsided and the exercise became automatic and almost meaningless. A few exceptional souls were earnest to the very end, led saintly lives, and enriched their religion by their precepts and practices. But, on the whole, religious exercises have always tended to be rather nominal and unreal. Just now, even this nominal observance is fast disappearing. Home life is different from what it was at one time. Parents seldom exercise any influence over their children. They are themselves not devoted to religious exercises. Life has become complex. Man has harder work to do and more problems to solve, and therefore has not sufficient leisure to think

of God. The changes that religions have undergone have diminished their claims to sanctity and the zeal of their adherents. Besides, these practices give no tangible results and do not therefore obtain precedence in daily life over the task of earning a livelihood or over pursuits which are more pleasant. The ordinary man selects a few exercises for observance, and fancies that he follows the religion. These exercises are generally of little value, and serve more as the outward distinguishing marks of his religion than as spiritual discipline and aids to devotion.

Thus the inner life which is the essence of religion has ceased to-day to have any value, if it has not, in fact, been completely forgotten by its nominal followers.

### *The Failure of Religions*

The failure of religions may be attributed to three causes: (*a*) faulty doctrine as to origin, (*b*) structural defects, and (*c*) wrong methods of initiation.

Several religions have grown out of the childish speculations of primitive peoples, their unsound inferences, and their natural yearning for the discovery of some superior being who can help and protect them in their troubles and sorrows. The human mind seeks the cause of every unusual phenomenon that comes under its observation. In the absence of sufficient knowledge, supernatural powers were in the early days attributed to natural phenomena. Thunder and lightning, rain and storm, were regarded as superior powers on account of their mightiness, and became the

gods of some people. The sun and moon, Jupiter and Venus, were regarded as gods on account of their light-giving power. Snakes and crocodiles, small-pox and cholera, were invested with divinity because they were frightful and were believed to spare the people only if they were worshipped. Certain trees and rocks associated with some arresting incident came to be regarded as the abodes of divine beings. Ancestor-worship and hero-worship grew out of reverence and esteem. Religions of this type are not worth considering. The origin of religions like Śaivaism and Judaism is shrouded in mystery, and it is impossible now to trace the failure of these religions back to their source. The younger religions seem to owe their origin to certain men who received higher knowledge. Buddha, Jesus, and Muhammad are supposed to have received such knowledge.

But it may be assumed that they could not have communicated to their disciples all the knowledge they had received. For certain forms of knowledge based on direct experience are not communicable, such as the taste of sugar, the sweetness of divine contemplation, and the capacity to see God in all things. Even of those that could have been communicated, their disciples could have received only what was within the capacity of their intellect to understand or their nature to appreciate. Knowledge useful only to a few cannot be good enough for a large number, and may not therefore serve the purpose of a national or a universal religion. Even if all the knowledge gained had been transmitted, it would not by itself

have been enough for the needs of the religion. Religion is not a matter of mere knowledge. It relates to life as a whole and must be able to influence every department of life. In order to achieve this, it ought to provide a comprehensive scheme and definite means of leading a good life. In the absence of knowledge that may be said to be completely adequate to the demands of practical life, no religion can be satisfactory or really successful.

The second cause of failure is the defect in the structure of religions. Every religion must have a more or less philosophical basis. It must give an answer to questions such as the following: Is the world real or unreal? Is a man the mere body or something higher than that? Is there a purpose in his life, has he a goal to reach, or is life left to chance? If there is a goal, what is it? Is man the sole factor in the attainment of the goal or is he guided and controlled by a superior being? Answers to these and similar questions will form the foundation of a religion and may be called its philosophy. If the religion holds out a goal, it must give an account of the path to the goal and the means of reaching it.

The elements of a religion are thus fourfold, and if they are fully worked out and co-ordinated, its structure may be said to be satisfactory. But few religions possess such a scientific structure. One religion may have an unsatisfactory theory but a lofty goal. Another may present a clear-cut path but prescribe inadequate means. Such religions are not workable and fail to be of use to their followers.

The third cause of the failure of religions is the wrong method of initiation. The general rule is that children automatically become followers of the religion to which their parents belonged. Here the question of suitability or of utility never enters. A saintly father may have a vicious son who follows his father's religion. If it suits one, it cannot suit the other. A religion which demands great self-sacrifice cannot be followed by one whose intellectual equipment is poor and power of self-control weak. It cannot be said that the father and son were born with the same degree of intelligence and the same amount of self-control. The inequality of men even at birth cannot be questioned. Therefore the religion of the father adopted by the son must end in failure.

Besides, each stage of civilization demands an appropriate development in the religions of the people. A religion which rules by threats and punishments cannot remain long in a country where knowledge and freedom have their sway. Then the religion becomes as useless to parents as to their children and proves to be practically lifeless.

The second method of adoption is that of being converted to a religion. Few people, however, are converted to a new religion by conviction. Before a man gives up his first religion on the ground that he is convinced of its errors, he must have had a thorough and accurate knowledge of it. But even the humblest religion has a field of knowledge, too wide for the average man to master. Besides, he requires extensive knowledge of the physical, mental, moral, and social

sciences to get a correct understanding of the religion. Having mastered his own religion, he must master the new religion and then compare the two religions to decide whether he can give up the old religion and accept the new one instead. Such extensive knowledge of the two religions and of the sciences can be acquired by very few persons. Therefore, conversion by conviction, which is the only right course, is next to impossible. Conversion can therefore be made mainly by wrong methods such as trading on ignorance, appealing to human weakness, and the offer of temporal advantages. Men converted in this way cannot be said to have accepted the new religion on the ground of acceptability or of the spiritual value in it.

## *The Value of Religions*

There are religions in an undeveloped state like Lokayata (sensualism) which have been serving the evil propensities of their followers by upholding loose morals. But the religions of the more advanced peoples have, as a rule, been able to do good. They present the ideal of an all-loving God or of men on the threshold of godliness. The contemplation of these ideals is open to most of the followers of a religion and tends to counteract evil tendencies and to strengthen the good. The practices enjoined by such religions also serve to exalt the mind, and their rules of conduct give knowledge of right and wrong. But we know there is a vast gulf between mere knowing and realizing, and between realizing and doing. Knowledge is only a

means possessing no fixed value of its own. Complete realization* of truth and action are ends, and if these are not attained little progress is made.

Another advantage of a religion is that it produces uniformity in the habits and customs of its followers and brings about unity among them. It serves to stabilize society, especially if it has touched upon the social aspect of life.

But the unity in a particular religion has often caused disunion in the larger unit of the nation itself. The followers of some religions have taken up the position of distinct political units and created jealousies and factions in the State. Men have been led to think of their religion as they thought of their country, and have endeavoured to increase the number of its adherents as they would extend the territorial limits of their country. Some men have been even more loyal to their religion and ready to sacrifice their country's interests for the sake of their religion. Wars have been fought in Europe on the basis of religion. Under the impulse of fanaticism, people have gone so far as to think that men of other religions had no right to live in the world created by their own God, and inhumanly to massacre the so-called infidels; or to think that those who belonged to other religions were doomed to eternal damnation, and to use all means, fair and foul, to save them from hell-fire by

* The realization of a truth compels action. Mere knowledge does not. Several people know that all men are essentially divine, but do not translate the knowledge into action in their dealings with others. But those who have realized the truth act up to it.

taking them into their own fold. The power of religions in the past, whether for good or for evil, seems to have been real enough; but to-day they often serve merely as labels.

We have seen that very few follow a religion on grounds of suitability; many of those who appear to follow a religion do not really belong to that religion. For the sake of a mere name, atrocities are committed, and persecutions are carried out without a moment's thought. Those who run amok in the name of religion are usually those who are most indifferent to the social and religious obligations enjoined on them. Their conduct is due partly to ignorance and blind zeal; but it is also due in part to the decay that has set in in most religions to-day.

### *The Reform of Religions*

If religious institutions are to last long and be really useful, they ought to strengthen their weak points and undergo such modifications as will create inter-religious harmony and good will. Each religion must clearly define its scope and purpose and perfect its fourfold elements. Proselytizing must cease. The public must regard it as a crime against humanity and the State and society must penalize it.

But whatever reform religious institutions may undergo, they can never become the real religion. The real religion is dynamic. It must be able to uplift a soul and ultimately unite it with God. The religions that we know of have no life, no driving force. They are

only creatures and are themselves subject to growth and decay. One emperor comes and fosters a religion, another comes and wipes it out. The very lives of religions depend upon the whims and fancies of men. The real religion instead of being a creature must be a creator. It must sustain the people instead of being sustained by them. It must be able to guide us, control us, and give us perfection. The next chapter will deal with it.

## CHAPTER II

# THE REAL RELIGION

*The existence of Real Religion—its characteristics—its functions—its relation to conventional religions—its fourfold knowledge—the agents of religion—the Śaiva view of religion*

### *The Existence of Real Religion*

Real religion is that which lies behind such phrases as "religious experience" and "religious man." Religious experiences are not understood to have reference to any one of the so-called religions. They are experiences containing an invariable factor, religion, on account of which they are so named. Most of us have had religious experiences. There have been moments in our lives when we thought more of the good of others than of our own, when we had real sympathy for others, and in helping them enjoyed a calm serene joy, "a joyless joy."* This is religious experience of the ordinary type. Of a higher order is the experience of a man absorbed in supermundane thoughts, quite unconscious, for the time being, of his very existence in this world. This man has no thought of his body or his worldly possessions. Sacrificing any of these for the sake of others is therefore a matter of no consequence to him. So he is all goodness, and has almost transcended even the ordinary

* Joy without excitement.

distinction of right and wrong. Of a lower type is the occasional desire even in a hardened criminal to help one in distress. The outstanding common factor of all these experiences is goodness. A religious man, again, is not a partisan of any one religion, but one who views life as an occasion to extend his love for others and to efface himself as much as possible; in short, he is one who is good.

Thus religion manifests its presence in goodness, whether it be in "religious experience" or in "religious men." It must therefore be a cause of goodness. An invariable concomitant of goodness is truth. It is only the person who is in possession of truth that can really be good. The man who knows the truth knows that he is not a mere individual, that he is not even a mere member of society, that the soul of souls is God, and he is therefore essentially divine. He will not therefore do what he would if he had thought of himself as an individual pitted against ot herindividuals. He will not set any value on pleasure or attach any importance to worldly possessions. He is in tune with the infinite, and is therefore good. Possession of basic truths is thus essential to absolute goodness. Again, wherever there are goodness and truth there are peace and harmony, which form bliss. So wherever there is goodness, there are truth and bliss. Religion thus manifests itself in three forms, goodness, truth, and bliss, which are really its effects. Śaivaism calls these Sat*-chit-ananda.

* Literally Sat means that which lasts for ever; and goodness is everlasting.

## *Its Characteristics*

If religion is capable of these manifestations, it can be regarded as a power that gives rise to the manifestations. As there is evidence of various classes of men in various countries having religious experience, religion must be working, in some degree, in the whole human race. Again, as the distinction between man and the subhuman species is only conventional, what is universal in man must be found in other species also. As even the most saintly man has the urge to go higher, there is no limit at which the urge stops. The objective of the urge is therefore perfection. We may therefore define religion as the inward power which urges all living beings to strive to reach higher and higher stages, the highest being perfection. As it produces perfect goodness, it must be something greater than that. Acting on different kinds of people, the urge produces different degrees of goodness. These degrees are the goals of different religions in the conventional sense. Of these we shall speak later.

We have posited that the religious urge is universal. The question arises, Why is it so conspicuous by its absence in our ordinary lives? In some persons it makes its appearance after long intervals. It has to be found out whether it leaves a person when it ceases to manifest itself, or stays permanently in him but without being recognized by any one. If it is a force that comes and goes, it will not go of itself, as its purpose is to do

good; and it has to be assumed that there is some higher power to put it in and take it out in special circumstances. A power greater than religion would not play with it in an aimless and inconstant manner, as even humble beings like ourselves work with definite aims. Besides, it must be more beneficent and would not therefore take away from us an influence that does us endless good. The urge must therefore exist in all living beings, work incessantly on them, and lead them along the path towards perfection.

## *The Functions of Religion*

The chief functions of this urge which induces evolution are twofold, the pursuit of ideals and the preservation of life. The former is the ultimate aim and the latter is subservient to it, as without life no kind of activity would be possible. Therefore every effort made by a living being to procure food and rest and to seek pleasure is started by this urge.

It may be asked whether what are called wrong acts also are caused by this urge. The answer is, yes. Wrong acts are those that do not reach the fixed standard. Wrong acts differ from right acts only as failure in an examination differs from passing it. A pass is obtained if a certain standard is reached. Failure results in not reaching the standard. A right act requires reaching a certain standard of knowledge, desire, and self-control. If the standard is not reached, the act is wrong. The required standard cannot be reached all of a sudden. It has to be reached gradually.

Till it is reached, the act must be wrong. Therefore wrong acts are as necessary for our upliftment as right ones. No child can learn to walk without a number of falls. Falling is a necessary evil. As falling is failing to walk, every fall may appear to be a case of the child losing the skill it has attained to walk. On the other hand, every fall is followed by the adjustment of some set of muscles in the joints and proves to be an occasion for gaining facility in walking. Similarly every wrong act of ours recoils on us, makes us realize its evil consequences, causes a tendency to avoid it, and to choose the right course thereafter. Wrongdoing is therefore a step towards the goal. Just as if the child were able to walk without a fall it would be all the better, so if a man could avoid wrongdoing it would be desirable; but it is impossible.

Not only the microcosm but the macrocosm also would appear to come under its sway. After the world had been formed and living beings sprang up, evolution seems to have been working for a purpose. One side of the purpose is the attainment of knowledge. The senses came one after another as means of giving knowledge by direct observation. Finally came the higher intellect of an Einstein and of those men whose vision was probably even keener than Einstein's, and produced, perhaps, far subtler theories, which have not reached the scientific world. If evolution had been directed only towards physical efficiency, no special purpose could be attributed. But its pursuit of the means of attaining knowledge shows that it is

directed by a beneficent power, which can be identified with the urge of religion.

Evolution has been working on the moral side too. It is tending to place joy and goodness together. The man who is good rejoices even when he undergoes physical suffering. The thief's mind is not altogether happy even when he derives comforts and pleasure out of the wealth acquired by theft. The joy of the bad man causes bodily excitement and consequent depression, and is hardly ever steady or lasting. His joy is really pain compared to the joy of the saint. Besides, might is giving place to right. The enslaving of individuals is disappearing. The practice of enslaving nations is on the decline. Even animals are receiving fair treatment. There are recent phases in the evolution of man which tend to make the world good, pointing to the goal of goodness, truth, and bliss.

Social evolution also marches in the same direction. The individual sacrifices his interests for the welfare of the group, which, in turn, sacrifices itself for the whole society. Selfless co-operation is gaining ground and will eventually dominate the world. This will be the basis of universal goodness, which appears to be the very goal of evolution. If we admit this, we must postulate some factor or power that causes this purposeful evolution of the universe towards goodness. This power must be an all-pervading one and can be identified with the power which we call religion. The third function of the power is thus the evolution of the universe as a whole.

## The Relation to Conventional Religions

We referred to the different heights to which religion raises different souls and stated that these heights might be called religions in the conventional sense. These heights are really the heights of truth, goodness, and bliss attained by souls, and will have to be measured in terms of one of these. Since we have no means of accurately measuring goodness or bliss, we have to make the division on the basis of the amount of truth that has been attained by an individual. Of the endless truths that come within the purview of a being, its knowledge of itself may be singled out as a convenient basis of division. Certain living beings are incapable of cognizing themselves and have no knowledge of themselves. Some animals and human beings identify themselves with their individuality. The religion of these may be called Egoism. There are some men who identify themselves with other men, and who may be called Altruists. Some transcend all these and find a unity in the whole universe. These may be called Universalists. These divisions may be further subdivided. An Egoist, for example, may identify himself with the body and the senses, or with the intellect, or with the empirical ego, and so on. Thus, though religion itself cannot be divided into segments, its effects on living beings may be classified and shown to correspond to some of the prevailing religions. Since these effects depend upon the state of the individuals,

they are the measure of the state of these individuals, and a gradation of these effects becomes a means of classifying individuals into sections, each of which may be called a religion in the conventional sense.*

### *Its Fourfold Knowledge*

We must now see how religion takes the souls through the various sections of the path one after another. The evolution of the individual requires first of all the preservation of life, and secondly the pursuit of ideals. These ideals are milestones in the path of evolution. Every individual stands somewhere among these milestones and strives to reach the next which, for the time being, is his goal. Religion is directly concerned with taking the individual to his chosen goal. For this, it must provide him with the knowledge of himself and of his condition, of the goal to be reached, of the path to the goal, and of the means of reaching the goal.

As regards himself, a man must know what he essentially is, whether he is the body, the senses, or the intellect, or a compound of these, or something different from these. If he is different from them, he has to know the essential nature of all these, of his desires and actions, and of the material universe, and whether this universe is a "fortuitous concourse

* As the sections are successive, the conventional religions corresponding to them must be successive. One of them leads to another. Therefore it is wrong to suppose that they are different paths to the ultimate goal.

of atoms," or whether it is fashioned by a Supreme Being, and if so what that Being is. He has thus to know the following five things: the self, the desires of the self, the actions of the self, the material universe in which the self is placed, and the Supreme Being.

His goal will depend largely on his view of the self. If he thinks that he is the body, he is a Lokayata (sensualist), and his goal is sense-pleasure. If he identifies himself with the intellect, he is an intellectualist, and his goal is intellectual enlightenment. If he goes higher he finds himself to be a bundle of Guna (character), and his goal is the perfection of character, and so on.

The path to the goal consists of the various steps that lead to it, and the means are the vehicles that take one through the steps. The path of the Lokayata (sensualist) is luxurious food, drink, etc., and the means any method of getting them whether just or unjust. The intellectualist pays no regard to sense-pleasures because he has passed that stage. His path begins with the acquisition of gross or superficial knowledge. Then he attains deeper and deeper knowledge, and finally that of the true nature of the things that concern him; and the means of attaining this are purity of life, study, introspection, contemplation, and the application of knowledge to real life. The path of the Gunaist or ascetic consists of the successive subjugation of wrongness and dullness, futile activity, and calm serene activity. It may be asked why the last one should be subjugated. Though it is calm and

serene, it entails the pursuit of the things of the world, which have no lasting value. Thus every man requires a fourfold knowledge for his progress. Religion supplies this either by intuition or by external knowledge. All the conventional religions owe their existence to knowledge supplied by the genuine religious experience of their founders, and if people follow or profess these religions, it is part of the scheme of the evolution of human beings.

### *Agents of Religion*

There is no fear of religion failing to give a person the knowledge he needs for his onward march to the goal. Religion is ever vigilant, knows the real knowledge with which to feed one at a given time, and does its work thoroughly. It is an omniscient, almighty, and all-loving power, and can do its work infinitely better than any of our so-called religious teachers. The latter need not therefore rack their brains over the salvation of other human beings. If they will follow the lead of religion for their own salvation, that is the best they can do in this world. On the other hand, it is very foolish for a person to imagine that he is the agent for the salvation of men and that but for him whole nations would be doomed to hell. These men set an unreasonably high value on the conventional religion that has, by the accident of birth or through other circumstances, claimed them as its own. But there is nothing wholly wrong even in them, as this way of thinking is inevitable at their stage of evolution.

They do not know of the existence of this Real Religion underlying all religions, the power which controls and guides the universe, of which this earth is only a particle of dust and we human beings the same fraction of the earth as it is of the universe. If they can serve religion with humility and help their brethren without arrogating to themselves the function of that supreme Power, they will do themselves and others positive good.

## *The Śaiva View of Religion*

This Real Religion is called by Śaivites the power of God (Śiva Shakti). This idea is set forth in the second couplet of Thiruvarulpayan of Umapatishivam: "The Shakti of God works for the upliftment of all souls to the condition of God Himself." She, our mother, knows what we need more than our earthly mother. All the conventional religions may perish, but She never perishes. Manickavachakar addresses God thus: "Only when the thought comes to the mother does she feed her child. But you feed us spontaneously, feel for us much more. You melt our hearts and give us goodness. You illumine the spirit and reveal the truths; you pour into us the sweet honey of bliss which knows no end. You envelop us all round. You are our real wealth. You are Śiva and Lord. I pursued you and have caught you unawares. How can you now get out of my grasp?" He praises here the Love of God, which is the Real Religion.

Having shown what Real Religion is, I propose to

give in the next chapter an outline of the philosophy supposed to have been made known by Real Religion (the Love of God) to St. Nandi, the foremost Śaiva Saint, and follow it up in the subsequent chapters with a detailed account of the same.

# CHAPTER III

# AN OUTLINE OF ŚAIVA DOCTRINE

*Postulates of Religion—God—the soul—Maya—Anava—action—path—exercises—goal*

## *Postulates of Religion*

Every science is based on some postulate or postulates. The postulate of Śaiva philosophy is "Something cannot come of nothing or become nothing." As something and nothing are incompatibles, the truth of this postulate will be easily conceded. If it is so easily accepted, it may be asked why it should be made a postulate. The reason is that there are philosophies which make the universe itself an illusion and which do not admit the reality of anything physical or mental; and there are others which admit the reality of the material universe, but maintain creation *ex nihilo*. The existence of such philosophies necessitates the enunciation of the postulate and the explanation of its implications.

The disappearance of water by evaporation or electrolysis and the appearance of dew-drops on leaves lead an ignorant man to the belief that something can become nothing and something can come of nothing. Similarly, the involution and evolution of the universe may be taken even by better informed people to be an instance of something becoming nothing and coming from nothing. To understand the involu-

tion and evolution of the universe, it is enough to understand the processes of the evaporation and electrolysis of water. We know that, in neither case, has water become nothing, but that it has turned into vapour in the one case, and into hydrogen and oxygen in the other. In both cases, what really happens is only a change of relationship between the particles that go to make up the water. When it becomes vapour, the distance between the particles increases; and when it splits into gases, the atoms that form the water molecules form molecules of their own. This is true of every kind of change in the universe. When the universe undergoes involution and evolution, the relationship between the particles in it undergoes change, but things neither disappear altogether nor come from mere nothing. Śaiva philosophy regards the world as something real and not as an illusion.

Since change takes place only in the relationship of the components of a substance, it follows that whatever has no components cannot undergo change. According to the old view of chemistry, an atom was indivisible and would not therefore be expected to undergo change. But recent discoveries have shown that an atom has components. In the years to come, even these may be resolved into more minute components. It is safe to assume that a point can be reached beyond which there can be no further analysis. The component or components obtained by such ultimate analysis cannot have any further components and will not therefore be subject to any change. This leads us to the principle "that whatever is further unanalysable

cannot undergo any change." This is the first corollary of the postulate. Again, since there can be no change in them, they have always been and will always be what they are. That is, they are eternal. This gives us the second corollary of the postulate.

When a thing changes or becomes another, it does so under the action of a force that produces the change in the relationship of its components. These forces also are governed by the postulate and cannot become nothing or come from nothing. Śaiva philosophy postulates the existence of the material cause and of the efficient cause of every phenomenon and is therefore essentially deterministic. The fundamental principles of this philosophy are derived from its postulate and the corollaries. We shall now consider what it has posited as the ultimate realities and the relationships between them.

## *God*

We may start with the assumption that the universe has been undergoing evolution. In the course of this evolution, living beings have been variously adapting themselves to varying environments. There must be a power in them which makes this variation possible. Again, the varying nature of the adaptation shows that the power is not mechanical, but intelligent. This power we have called "Religion" in the last chapter. It must be possessed by some intelligent being. This Being is usually called God. Since He leads all souls to perfection He must be an all-loving Being.

## *The Soul*

The essence of all living beings is the soul. But there is difference of opinion as to what this essence is. Some attribute to the soul knowledge, desire, and energy, which are ever changing. Some postulate a free-will in addition to them. The soul so understood is an indefinite and complex conception and cannot therefore receive scientific treatment. If one man invests the soul with certain adjuncts and another man with other adjuncts, the two men use the same word to denote two different things and cannot find means of agreement. The right course is to use the word to denote the essence of a living being, divested of all its adjuncts. It then becomes a simple thing that cannot be analysed any further.

Since living beings are numberless, souls also are numberless. We see that a living being knows, desires, and does. Therefore the soul must have the ability to know, to desire, and to do. But we see that the knowledge of a living being, say a man, changes. This change must be due to the change in the quantity of the energy of knowing. Since the soul is an elementary being, it cannot undergo change (corollary 1). Therefore the energy of knowing is not a characteristic of the soul. Besides, if it belonged to the soul, it would be definite in quality and strength or degree and could never change. But we see that it does change. Therefore the power or the energy is not the soul's and must be supplied to it by something else. Just as an engine

is a mechanism that can move, but moves only when power is supplied to it, so the soul has the ability to know, and begins actually to know only when the power of knowing is supplied to it. The desire of a living being also changes both in degree and in kind. Therefore the power of desiring cannot be the soul's. It can similarly be shown that the power of doing also is not the soul's. So, we see that the soul has the ability to know, to desire, and to do, but not the energy or power necessary for the activities. The energy must therefore be supplied to it by something else.

## *Maya*

That which supplies the energy to the soul is called Maya. It supplies not only the energy but also the tools necessary for using the energy, namely, the physical and the mental powers. It also gives the embodied soul a world to live in and things in the world to enjoy. All the worlds are products of Maya. These worlds are constantly undergoing change and are either in process of formation or in process of disintegration. In other words, they are evolving or involving. The word Maya itself means that which (Ma =) involves and (Ya =) evolves. The body, the mind, and the energy have all come from Maya and are therefore ultimately not different from one another. As Maya cannot be further resolved it must be eternal (corollary 2).

But the knowledge that the soul receives through the products of Maya is limited and often leads either to

doubt or to error. Just as, in dim light, a snake is mistaken for a piece of rope or is held in suspense as being either a snake or a rope, so, with the little knowledge that we derive through Maya, we often mistake wrong for right or are in suspense regarding the true nature of a thing. This limitation of knowledge must be due to some other cause or factor.

### *Anava*

This cause or factor is called Anava. The word literally means that which makes the soul (Anu =) an atom, that is, makes it indefinitely small and powerless. Anava constricts the soul's abilities to know, to desire, and to do, and does not allow energy to have its full scope. But certain products of Maya exert a force in opposition to it and allow a gradually increasing flow of energy according to certain principles. When the soul gets a little knowledge, it becomes conscious of itself, identifies itself with the body, and commits endless blunders.

The most pathetic feature of its blunders is that it is hardly ever aware of them. False pride is one of the first products of little knowledge, but when a person is actuated by it he feels he is quite in the right. The consequence is that the person does not realize for a long time that pride is his bitterest foe. Anava is thus the root cause of the soul's blunders and consequent misery. Maya gives limited knowledge through the senses and the intellect, and assists the soul in its struggle with Anava.

## *Action*

The acts of the soul appear as thoughts, words, and deeds. Right actions are those that are good to the self* and to others. Such acts naturally cause happiness. Wrong acts are those that are bad to the self* and to others. As they break harmonious relationships, they cause pain. Though right actions are sometimes accompanied by immediate pain, they ultimately bring pleasure which far outweighs the pain. Similarly, a wrong act may give immediate pleasure but ultimately leads to misery. The pain and pleasure due to right deeds and wrong deeds respectively are not necessarily experienced immediately after the deeds, but reach the soul as circumstances permit, sometimes much long after the deed. Murderers are sometimes arrested several years after the murder and then punished. The effects of these actions, manifested as pain and pleasure, produce a tendency in the souls to prefer the right and avoid the wrong. This tendency coupled with the knowledge received during the experience has the power of counteracting the evil effects of Anava. When Anava is completely overcome, the soul becomes free and reaches the final goal.

## *The Path*

The path to the ultimate goal may be conveniently divided into three sections. At the beginning of the first section the soul's knowledge is so little that it

* Self = the ego.

thinks of itself as an important being in the universe and is filled with the thought of itself and of its greatness. It is then individualistic and anti-social. While passing through this section, it realizes that its own welfare is to some extent linked with the welfare of others, and feels the necessity to love and help others and to be loved and helped by others. In the second section it puts into practice the lesson it learned while in the first section, fancies itself to be only a member of society and not an individual, and endeavours to conserve the good of society as a whole. The love for the society of which it is a member gradually extends to other societies and ultimately embraces the whole human race. It no longer considers service as a duty but feels that it is a natural function of man and finds satisfaction in its performance. In this section, the self loses its individuality and begins to think in terms of humanity at large. This brings further light to the soul and reveals to it its identity with that on which the whole universe depends, namely God. The third section begins here, and the activities of the soul are directed by this new conception of oneness with God and take the form of service to God and through Him to other living beings. Attachment to God becomes strengthened in this section and ends in identification with God, which is the ultimate goal.

### *Exercises*

Each section of the path has exercises specially suited to it. Their purpose is to facilitate the journey through

the particular section. The ordinary acts of man have only an indirect influence on the onward march. But these exercises have that special object in view. Some of these are reminders of the ideals. To this class belong the sacred ashes of the Śaivite, the cross of the Roman Catholics, and the rituals of various religions. The cross reminds the Christian of the sacrifice of the Christ; the sacred ashes remind the Śaivite of the love of God and spiritual illumination, and rituals generally serve to concentrate attention on the relationship of the soul to other ultimate realities. Reading the lives of saints and learning to love them tend to raise one to their level. The contemplation of God and of His perfection brings home to one's mind one's own insignificance, lifts one's thoughts to high ideals, and directs one's love to the ultimate reality. Besides these, there is a whole series of graded exercises particularly suited to each section of the path, which make themselves felt in the lives of men, influence their character, and uplift them.

## *The Goal*

The ultimate goal is becoming one with God. The soul has no power of its own, but has the ability to use any power it receives. Its activities depend upon the amount of power that it receives. This power gradually increases and illumines the soul. At the goal, the soul is once for all free from the hold of Anava and is filled with and enveloped in the love of God. It is then indistinguishable from God, just as a crystal pillar in the rays of the

noon-day sun cannot be distinguished from the light. It has then none of the activities of knowing, desiring, or doing. It enjoys the inexpressible bliss which knows no change, and in which all thought of lover, love, and the beloved is absent.

# CHAPTER IV

# GOD

*The conception of God—the attributes of God—the love of God—the five acts of God—the contemplation of God*

## *The Conception of God*

Many conventional religions have a lofty conception of God and hold almost identical views regarding His attributes. On the other hand, there are religions which have very primitive views of God, regarding Him only as a superman and attributing human frailties and weaknesses to Him, or picturing Him as a tyrant who is a slave to hatred and anger, pride and revenge. Such notions demoralize the life of the worshipper and make religion only a power for evil. Besides, even advanced religions have a popular side, which depicts God in a human form so as to appeal to the imagination of the masses. As a corrective of such notions, a list of God's attributes must find a place in religious philosophy, even if it does not help us in knowing His true nature.

## *The Attributes of God*

The attributes of God may be deduced from the conception of God given in the last chapter. We had to postulate the existence of God to explain the evo-

lution of the universe, and presented Him as the director of the universe. Since He causes the evolution of the universe, He must be different from Maya, soul, and Anava, which together form the universe. Maya, we all know, possesses unlimited energy, and, as God directs all this energy, several religious philosophies hold that He has unlimited energy. But energy can be used only to overcome resistance. He has no occasion to use energy, and it would therefore be inconsistent with His Lordship of the universe to attribute power to Him. What is ordinarily understood by the possession of unlimited power is really the directing of the unlimited energy existing in the universe.

Some theologians attribute to Him omnipotence instead of unlimited power. From one point of view, omnipotence is the same as unlimited power. But the word is sometimes used to mean the power to do what is, humanly speaking, impossible. The incarnation of God is an example of this. Birth and sufferings after birth are limitations, and it is therefore as impossible for God to be born as man as it is for a circle to become a square. It would be trifling with God to attribute to Him an omnipotence which includes the performance of acts involving inconsistency. God is also believed to help His devotees in the performance of miracles by interfering with the natural course of events. This is attributing to God the human frailty of favouritism. Miracles are only acts that cannot be explained by the knowledge available at present to the scientist. They really obey laws, and when these

laws are found out by man, miracles will cease to be impressive.

Since God causes the evolution of the universe, it is inferred that there can be nothing in it of which He is not aware. Therefore He is said to be omniscient. But He does not derive His awareness as we do by observation or inference. He transcends time; and the past, the present, and the future are equally present to Him. But omniscience really falls short of a correct notion of God; for knowing is an action, and all actions imply change; whereas the idea of God implies that He is changeless. It is more correct to say that He is the source of all knowledge than that He is the possessor of all knowledge.

God is not a Being of whom any need can be predicated. There is nothing that has to be achieved by Him. He is therefore said to be a perfect Being.

If a thing undergoes change, it must be subject to some power or circumstance outside it, which compels the change. Even when a man changes his plans himself, the occasion for the change is a circumstance outside himself. Since all the circumstances in the universe owe their origin to God, there can be nothing in the universe which can control Him or compel Him to change. He is therefore said to be unchangeable. He neither thinks nor desires nor acts, as each of these activities implies change. Neither has He likes and dislikes. A person is said to like or dislike a thing according as it gives him satisfaction or the opposite. But there is nothing capable of affecting God in either of these ways. It is therefore wrong to say that God

likes certain of our acts and dislikes certain others. It is just as immaterial to Him whether we worship Him or despise Him, as it is to the fire whether a man shivering with cold goes up to it and warms himself or fails to avail himself of it and continues to suffer. The Love of God goes as much to the despiser as to the lover, and in due course draws* him towards God, just as the fire ultimately attracts towards itself the man who has been standing aloof and has found the cold unbearable.

Since God does not occupy space and is in no way limited by it, He is said to be omnipresent. But the word is taken to mean being present everywhere, and the question is sometimes asked how God can be everywhere, seeing that space is occupied by other things. The principle, "that two things cannot occupy the same space at the same time," is inapplicable to God, as the things spoken of in the principle are material substances which alone occupy space. The same error underlies the idea that there can be no reality besides God. It is argued that if souls or the worlds should be realities, God would be limited by the fact of their mere existence and become imperfect. But, strictly speaking, it is wrong even to say that God is everywhere. For, God being everywhere, implies that He occupies space. To avoid the error, some say that He

* These so-called acts of God may create the impression that God works just as we do, and drive one to the conclusion that He undergoes change by these acts as we do by ours. Since our acts are processes in which energy is spent, they cause change in us. But God does not act as we do, and therefore His acts do not cause any change in Him.

is immanent in all beings, animate and inanimate. But immanence and omnipresence are equally meaningless to those of us who do not know the exact nature of God and matter.

### *The Love of God*

The only quality of God which we can comprehend is His lovingness.* This is also the only quality the knowledge of which is of real value to us. We have seen how God's Love has given us this precious body, gives us all the knowledge and energy we require, is ever present in us and guides us in our march towards the goal. It gave the soul the crudest form of body called protoplasm and made it live. This is itself an invaluable gift. Then it gave the soul more and more developed forms of body till the human form was reached. The love that can raise the protoplasm to the human form for the sake of the soul must be unlimited. Since this is the only quality of God that we can comprehend, our conception of God must be in terms of His love. Just as He is infinite, His love is infinite. Occasions may arise when even the mother hates the child. But God hates no one and has the same infinite love even for the most unrighteous as for the righteous, the object of the love being to make all perfect.

* "They are ignorant who say that Śiva and Love are different."—Tirumantram, 270.

In some philosophies God is called Absolute, and Love of God is called Śiva.

### *The Five Acts of God*

The benefits conferred on the soul by God's Love are fivefold, and are intended to free it from the grip of Anava and to give it the means to make the fullest use of its abilities to know, to desire, and to do. The first of these is the gift of the body and the mind, of a place to live in, and of things to be known, desired, and attained. The body and the mind belong to each individual. The granting of these gifts is usually called creation. If it were not for the Love of God, there would have been no creation or evolution. The particles that form our very body would not have come together and the particles themselves would not have been formed. It is the possession of the body and the mind that makes it possible for us even to think of ourselves.

The body that a soul received is believed to be determined by two circumstances. One of these is the condition of the soul in its relation to Anava. Anava constricts the capacities of the soul, and during evolution the constriction is gradually lessened. So the soul's relation to Anava is given by the powers of knowing, desiring, and doing it has already obtained. At a certain birth a soul possesses a certain amount of these powers. It will have to start with these and increase them further after the birth. The body that the soul receives must therefore suit the powers that it already possesses. The organs that control the body and those that are subject to them must be such as can give scope to the soul's powers. The nature of the

body is also said to be determined by the quantity and quality of past actions whose effects the soul has to experience through the body. But, as this experience is a means of counteracting Anavic constriction, the two circumstances become identical and reduce to one.

The second gift of God is the power to sustain the body. During this period of sustenance, the soul performs fresh acts and experiences pain and pleasure. In these it is associated with a great many other souls, which also perform fresh deeds and undergo new experiences. All these deeds and experiences must be appropriate to each of them. Sustenance is therefore a highly complex and involved function. For example, a particular person kills hundreds of fish in a single draw of net. Several men feed on them. The fish and the men deserve their experiences brought about by the act of the particular fisherman. The sustenance of the life of Napoleon meant the death of hundreds of thousands of human beings, the upsetting of empires, and the misery or happiness of millions who were indirectly affected by his acts. A Thiruvalluvar or a Tolstoy has saved and will save many lives by their gospel of Ahimsa. Not only a single man, but a single act of a single man like that of the Sarajevo assassin has often affected millions. In all these instances the acts and experiences of those who were affected by the acts of the particular individual could not have been otherwise, and were interrelated in the large unerring scheme of things called the sustenance of the universe.

When a person experiences pain as a result of his

wrongdoing, he realizes the wrongness of the action and the need for avoiding it. This realization tends to deter the man from repeating the offence, though the tendency is often counteracted by the inclination to wrongdoing due to Anavic influence. Experiencing pain is thus a twofold boon. It gives intellectual enlightenment and creates a tendency to avoid wrongdoing. Similarly, the experience of pleasure which comes of doing right gives a tangible proof of the goodness of certain acts and strengthens the resolve to act similarly thereafter. The latter of the two boons is really a power to counteract the influence of Anava. These are very valuable indirect gifts of God's Love received during life, and may be called enlightenment and suppression (of Anava) respectively. These are the third and the fourth gifts of God's Love.

The fifth gift of God's Love is disembodiment or the removal of the physical body. This happens when the body that a soul has received is no longer of any value to it. When the body has been removed, the soul gets a fresh and more suitable body. Disembodiment is thus a change that ought to be agreeable to the soul, in spite of the dread of death, which is an expression of the instincts of self-preservation and fear.

These five gifts of God's Love* are usually given in

* The evolution of the soul which results from these five gifts as well as the evolution and involution of the external universe goes on without any act or effort of God, though it is due to Him. The evolution of the universe and its involution go on like the swing of the pendulum.

the following order: embodiment (also called creation), sustenance, disembodiment (death), suppression (of Anava), and enlightenment. In the final instalment of enlightenment, the soul gets the fullest illumination and becomes divine, thus reaching the ultimate goal.

## *The Contemplation of God*

Receiving these five invaluable gifts from God, our sense of gratitude would ordinarily fill our minds with thoughts of Him. But we hardly ever think of Him. This is due to an error in our way of living. We have been used to regard the world and the body as ultimate realities and have fixed our thoughts on these. We find it hard to extricate our thoughts and use them for the attainment of real bliss. But there have been men who have realized the evanescence of the world and the eternal bond of God's Love and found real joy in it. A Śaiva Saint, addressing God, says, "O giver of peace, you gave me yourself and got me in return. Who is the cleverer of the two? I got endless bliss from you. What did you get in return? O master, who has made a temple of my heart, O Śiva abiding at Thiruperunthurai, O Father, O Lord, who has taken possession of my body, to you I am no equal as an article of barter." Things of the world do not give us joy unmixed with grief. Our dearest friend raises sorrow by his inevitable absence from our company or by becoming a prey to misfortunes. But God's Love is ever with us and undergoes no change to grieve us. The highest earthly love known to us

is that of a mother, and therefore it is natural and appealing to us to conceive God's Love as a perfect mother. The thought of an unceasing endless store of love, ever with us, helping us, cheering us, and illumining us, should fill us with ecstatic joy. Another Śaiva Saint says, "As I quietly and calmly contemplated God's Love with real devotion, there issued forth a higher form of joy. On the day I tasted it, sugar seemed bitter and fresh honey tasted extremely sour."

The Love of God being with us, the loss of worldly possessions would be nothing to us. Despair in this world would be impossible. Sorrow or grief would find no room. Fearlessness and joy would reign in our hearts. A saint says: "We are not the slaves of any one. We are not afraid of death. We are free from woes and sorrows. We have no guile. We are above all things. We know no diseases. We shall not bow to anything. It is all joy with us, never sorrow. We are slaves of one who is no slave of any one. We are eternally bound to Him."*

The contemplation of God is far more precious than even the five invaluable gifts of God's Love. Making worldly possessions valueless, contemplation frees us from pride and lust; giving bliss, it takes off anger, hatred, and jealousy; taking us to God, it gives us a mother, father, brother, and friend, insepar-

* He further says, "Seeing that He who made the universe and found joy in it resides in my heart as mother, father, and brother, what cares can I have? He is the friend of His devotees. He of Tirupatiripulyur has always been the invisible companion of those who contemplate Him."

able from us, and causes the flow of a never-failing fountain of joy. Even if God's love were not required for the evolution of the material universe, it is necessary to cleanse our hearts, to ennoble us, and perfect us. No earthly power can make such a strong appeal to our feelings and uplift the soul in the way that divine contemplation can do. All the attempts that society makes to this end are as the light of a glow-worm before the midday sun. Divine contemplation is the highest moral lever, besides being an end by itself.

If we can contemplate God with all love and let His Love dominate our minds, the thought of God will come to us of itself in whatever business we may be engaged, sanctify every one of our acts, and make our lives sublime and holy.

# CHAPTER V

# ANAVA

*The nature of Anava—the effect of Anava on action —the effect of wrong action on Anava—the place of Anava in right action—the effect of right action on Anava*

## *The Nature of Anava*

The cause of evil is one of the great problems of life. The statesman and the priest, the teacher and the parent are engaged in finding out and removing the cause of evil. Different evils are known to have different causes. But it is the ultimate cause of evil that philosophy tries to discover so as to get at the power that can counteract it and serve as the panacea of all evils. One philosophy attributes evil to desire, another to selfishness, another to ignorance, a fourth to Satan, and so on. Some desires are good and others are bad. It is bad desires that usually cause evil. Besides, desires are not ultimate causes. For example, a man desires to steal another man's money. This desire is the effect of the desire to obtain something he needs, say food, which in turn is caused by the desire to avoid hunger. The ultimate desire is the desire to avoid pain. Pain is a relative term. One man's pain is another man's pleasure. There are some who find pleasure in starving if they can give their food to others in need. Pain being thus indefinite, the desire to avoid

pain is also indefinite. To say that the ultimate cause of pain is an indefinite thing is to admit ignorance. Besides, desiring is an act and as such it is an effect. An effect cannot be an ultimate cause. Therefore desire cannot be an ultimate cause.

Selfishness is the desire of an individual to make himself happy even at the expense of others. Being a desire, it too cannot be an ultimate cause.

Ignorance is merely absence of knowledge and is not a thing that has positive existence. It is absurd to speak of a non-existing thing as a cause. We hear of acts performed out of ignorance. But these statements are the result of loose thinking. A child is said to have put its hand into fire because it did not know that it would burn. The fact is that the child thought that the fire was a beautiful thing and wanted to take it. The real cause is its desire to reach beautiful things. Wrong knowledge may be a cause but not ignorance.

Śaiva philosophy cuts the Gordian knot by denying the very existence of evil. If A murders B, it is good for A and B. God is the director of the universe, and under His rule nothing untoward can happen. When A murders B, the latter gives up the body and gets a more suitable body. A suffers for the murder and gains wisdom, foresight, and mental balance, or will throw off the present body for a fresh one. The dependents of A and B also will become wiser and more self-reliant. But, though Śaiva philosophy denies the existence of evil, society not only affirms its existence but works for its eradication. This amazing difference between religious philosophy and social philosophy is due to the

fact that the reality with which religion is concerned is the soul, whereas that of society is the body and worldly possessions. What society calls evil is not non-existent but is the "error or wrong" of philosophy, which is a far more innocent thing. If we wish to find out the ultimate cause of wrongdoing, we can do so by examining a few instances of it.

If the murder of B by A is a premeditated act, A must have thought that B had no right to live in this world because he had wronged either him or some of his friends or his country. This thought is the result of insufficient knowledge and wrong reasoning, as neither A nor anyone else has the ability to form a correct judgment regarding B's right to live in this world. If the murder followed an exchange of words or blows, it was committed in a rage when the mind was incapable of forming correct judgments. Here the cause of murder is insufficient thinking. If the mind was not clouded by anger, the murder might have been due to a weak will which could not prevent him from the act. The murder might also have been avoided, if A had taken prompt action to defend himself by some method short of murder. He was not able to take such action owing to lack of sufficient energy. So the murder is traced to insufficiency either of knowing, willing, or doing. We have attributed to the soul the ability for these three activities. The soul then would function correctly if it received sufficient energy. The supply of energy comes from Maya, which freely offers all that the soul wants. Hence there must be a slip between the cup and the lip. The

allowance is sufficient, but the whole of it does not reach the soul. There must be a third factor involved in the process which blocks the passage and prevents the full flow of the energy that is offered. This something requires a name, and Śaiva philosophy calls it Anava. It is a significant name derived from the word "Anu," which means an atom. Anava therefore means that which tends to make the soul's powers indefinitely small.

What Anava is, is a matter of great dispute. Some attribute the limitation or the imperfection of man to the soul's tools, the mind and the body. These tools are given to us by God's Love. It would not offer us such imperfect gifts unless they were good for us. These could not be good for us if the soul had no limitation, if the soul had been unconditioned and perfect. A perfect soul requires a perfect body and mind or none at all. God's Love would not give an impotent intellect to a soul whose capacity for knowledge is perfect. Therefore some direct limitation of the soul's powers must be postulated to justify the gift of the body and mind with limitations.

Others attribute the limitation to the soul itself and regard it as an essential quality of it. But we know that when an essential quality of a thing disappears, the identity of the thing itself disappears. Suppose a loosely jointed framework of four equal rods is placed so that one of its angles is a right angle. The rods then form a square. But a slight push or pull at a corner robs the framework of the right angle and hence of its square form. Along with the disappearance of this

essential quality, namely rectangularity, also disappears the square which possesses the quality. So, if the limitation should be an essential quality of the soul, when it disappears the soul also must disappear. In reply to this objection, it may be said that the soul as soul does disappear and becomes God. But if one substance becomes another, one of the two must be a complex entity formed of the other by the addition of a third substance. For example, iron becomes rust by combining with the third substance, oxygen. But, as both God and Soul are eternal, neither of them can be complex (corollary I). Besides, if souls should become Gods, there would be many Gods, each of them directing the universe. Such a conclusion is prima facie an absurdity. Again, since the soul is eternal, its essential attributes also must be eternal. It would follow, therefore, that its limitation must also be eternal and the soul could never be free from them, and that evolution would be futile.

### *The Effect of Anava on Action*

We have given the name Anava to that entity which blocks the passage of the energies to know, to desire, and to do. Let us consider the condition of the soul's ability to know. Anava prevents the soul from knowing the whole truth and thereby causes misunderstanding. Just as in the dark, for want of sufficient light, a man mistakes a rope for a serpent, so the soul, in the insufficient knowledge received by it, conceives things to be

different from what they are and blunders at every turn.

Its first and foremost blunder is the identification of itself with the body or mind. It does not see its own vast potentiality, the eternal brotherhood of souls, and its absolute dependence on God. It is aware only of things it can perceive with the senses, seeks pleasure as the *summum bonum* of life, and makes the search after it its all-absorbing occupation. Each ego, while engaged in this work, sees other egos interfering with its desires, and carries on a perpetual warfare against them. This fosters the feelings of I-ness and My-ness. I-ness consists in setting a special value on oneself and in applying one law for one's own self and a different law for others. My-ness similarly sets a special value on one's own possessions, sentient or insentient, such as relations, friends, and property. The feelings of I-ness and My-ness are the cause of the majority of our wrong deeds. There are also other channels of wrongdoing which, as we have already seen, proceed from the insufficiency of energy caused by the constriction of the soul's capacity by Anava.

## *The Effect of Wrong Action on Anava*

Anava leads a soul to wrongdoing. Every wrong is ultimately followed by the experience of pain. The experience of the suffering that follows it forces itself into the soul's stock of knowledge. The painful consequences of an act are either immediate or remote. If a thief is caught, he receives immediate punishment.

Otherwise, he suffers later in some other connection.* If a person has had immediate suffering as a result of yielding to temptation and doing something wrong, he tries to avoid this suffering thereafter even if he is not able to resist the temptation. For a time he escapes,* but later he is caught. Then comes the desire to avoid the wrong. But the suffering is not remembered in its full intensity after some time, and the desire to commit the wrong act in a fresh set of circumstances proves stronger than the desire to avoid it and ends in the commission of the act. In this way the wrong is repeated and becomes a habit. Once an act has become a habit, the external stimulus acts almost automatically and brings about the act with little expenditure of mental energy. It gives no time for the consideration of an earlier decision to avoid it. But suffering is also repeated, and the time comes when the suffering is unbearable. This is the turning-point in the curve of wrongdoing. The person realizes that the wrong act ought to be avoided, and a strong desire arises to avoid such wrongdoing. This becomes stronger with each repetition of it. The act is then altogether given up. The constriction of the three capacities is then overcome though only to a small extent. In some cases, if a particular form of wrongdoing is overcome, some allied forms also are given up. A person who has obtained so much real knowledge and enlightenment as to avoid theft may give up cheating and lying also.

* But he can never escape the ultimate painful consequence, which does not enter into his calculation. See Chapter IX.

Two questions may now arise. The first is whether suffering is indispensable to the avoidance of wrongdoing. We see that when the heinousness of an offence is clearly explained, the knowledge alone is, in some cases, enough to prevent a person from wrongdoing. He does not wait for the experience of the suffering that would result from it. But mere knowledge, however clear it may be, cannot sufficiently prevail on man to change an attitude which is the result of persistent tendencies. These can be attacked only by experience. If we see a man give up wrongdoing as the result of a sermon, he is either in the earliest stage when the impulse is weak or is in the last stage mentioned in the last paragraph. Besides knowledge, fear also serves to prevent the commission of an offence. Hell-fire* was invented by many religions for this purpose. But the disadvantage of fear is that when a man begins to disbelieve or to forget the existence of such horrors he may plunge into wrongdoing, and once he starts he is likely to continue along that path. Physical indisposition, too, sometimes helps to avoid temptation; but, as in the case of fear, its effect is temporary. The experience of suffering is necessary for the complete removal of the tendency to do wrong.

The second question is whether pain and suffering have any effect if they are experienced long after the commission of the offence that occasioned them. It may be contended that the offence itself may be

* Śaivaism posits the existence of a mental state of agony called Narakam, which corresponds to hell. It is a magnified form of an unpleasant dream, but is not a place.

forgotten, or, even if it is remembered, the causal relation between it and the suffering may not be known. But remembering and forgetting are phenomena only of the conscious mind. In the subconscious mind all past impressions are retained never to disappear completely. Therefore it is possible for the soul to connect the wrong with its painful consequences. Besides, the pain by itself might be a means of making the soul act more righteously thereafter.

## *The Place of Anava in Right Action*

We have seen that wrong acts are caused by Anava and that the effect of the wrong acts weakens Anava. We must now see if Anava has any share in the performance of right action. Every human being does righteous acts. Almost all human beings are under the grip of Anava. Therefore Anava exercises its influence even over those who do righteous acts. The problem is whether it influences the performance of such acts.

Right action proceeds from fear of suffering, love of gain, or the conviction that it is right. A person is dissuaded from a wrong act through fear of direct retribution, as when he is punished in a court of law, or of indirect punishment as social boycott or of remote suffering such as hell-fires mentioned in some religious scriptures. The suffering comes either to the mind or to the body, which is not the soul. Regarding either of these sufferings as one's own suffering

is due to a misapprehension, which is the result of Anava. Therefore fear of suffering is occasioned by Anava, and its share in right acts induced by fear has to be admitted. As regards love of gain, gains are really the opposite of suffering and belong to the same class. What is true of suffering must be true of gain, and the influence of Anava on right action proceeding from love of gain is easily seen. Coming to the third cause of right action, we find that the influence of Anava in this is at its lowest ebb. The doer of a right act is able to do what is right, because he sees that a particular act is right, feels that he ought to do it, and does it. But there is in him the feeling of I-ness. He says, "I ought to do it" and this "I" is the first offspring of Anava. Not only in ordinary right actions, but even in religious worship, when a man adores God as "you" and refers to himself as "I," Anava is there and exercises its influence.

But the domination of I-ness in right acts is more likely to hurt Anava than benefit it. The moment the person realizes that right action is beneficial to him, he will follow it with all his might. It increases his power to desire and to do the right, and thus works against Anava. As right acts are followed by pleasure, there is an additional flow of the power to desire and to do right. Right action thus causes a steady increase of the powers of knowing, desiring, and doing. The result is that the man who began to do right to gain some ends learns to do it in the absence of such motives. He will do right for its own sake and later lose even the feeling of I-ness.

### *The Effect of Right Action on Anava*

Thus righteousness, which was started by one aspect of I-ness, has been slowly killing another aspect of it, its very essence. The sense of egoism and the desire to enjoy oneself and to dominate others fast disappear. The narrow individualism passes away. The I-ness is gradually extended till the "I" is identified with the whole creation. The capacities are filled with the necessary energy and the constricting power is in its last gasp. The man then extends himself even beyond the universe. His knowledge is so full that he realizes the existence of something beyond the universe, an ideal of perfection. He then sees that ideal. Then the I-ness and My-ness disappear altogether and he becomes the ideal itself. Anavic power is at an end. If now the man acts, he does not feel that he acts, because he sees not himself. The soul becomes, as it were, the body of God. Just as the body only does and never says that it does, so the soul acts but feels not that it acts. Anava is gone. All the troubles of the soul are at an end. It knows no sorrows, and knows not even joy; for without sorrow there can be no joy. What it experiences can only be described as a joyless joy.

## CHAPTER VI

# MAYA*

*Tools of knowing—tools of desiring—tools of doing—tools of regulation—the constituents of the physical body—varying tools of living beings—other worlds and beings—classification of the products of Maya*

We see that man is able to know, to desire, and to do, whereas the soul has only the abilities for these activities, but neither the energies nor the faculties necessary for them. These come from another entity, which we have called Maya. It is the source not only of these, but also of the worlds and the things that are in them. It has been possible to make a study of God and Anava by their relationship with us, but Maya will have to be studied from its products. These present themselves during an analysis of the soul's activities, as we shall now see.

## *Tools of Knowing*

Consider the activities of perceiving a book. Light from the book passes into the eye and falls on the retina. It is carried in some other form by the optic nerve to the optical centre in the brain. This must

* The substance of this chapter is largely philosophical and cannot be brought under the domain of science. This is included in the book, as an account of Śaiva philosophy would be incomplete without it.

be transformed into the shape of the book before it is presented to the soul. For, what the soul sees is a book and not the effects of light vibrations. Therefore there must be some tool which transforms these into the shape of the book. This tool supplied by Maya may be called the organ of sight.* This has not been identified in the body and is therefore not formed of material substance. It must be superphysical. When the organ has transformed the effects of light into the form of a book, the soul can see it only if it possesses the energy to know. This energy is a product of Maya, but cannot freely reach the soul as its ability is constricted by Anava. A tool is necessary to counteract the constriction and to allow the energy to reach the soul. This tool Śaiva philosophy has named Vidya. When the figure of the book is thus presented to the soul, it sees it but cannot cognize it. It can only be aware of the mere existence of the thing,† and requires a tool to relate‡ it to things already known. The tool used for this purpose is called Buddhi (intellect). In the act of cognizing the book, the soul thus makes use of the power of knowing and the three tools, the organ of sight, Vidya, and the intellect. Besides the organ of sight, there are the organs of

* The physical eye is by mistake called the sense organ.

† This knowledge is called Nirvikalpa (undifferentiated knowledge). It is really with the help of the Manas that the soul sees this. The work of the Manas is to catch impressions, to attach to things, and to desire.

‡ When the sensation of a new animal is received, the intellect tries to place it in a known species by observing its qualities. This knowledge is Savikalpa (differentiated).

sound, touch, taste, and smell, making five organs of sensing. Perception through the senses thus involves the use of seven tools: the five organs of sense, Vidya, and Buddhi (intellect).

## *Tools of Desiring*

When the soul is aware of the existence of a thing, it desires to have it if it is useful to it. To desire a thing, the soul must get the energy to desire. Desiring consists of two elements, the knowledge that a particular thing is desirable and the act of forming an attachment to the object. The energy necessary for this is that of knowing and doing. This dual energy must reach the soul. The ability for desiring being constricted by Anava, a tool is necessary to relax the constriction. This tool is called Raga. When the soul has got the power of desiring, it requires a tool with which to desire. This tool is called Manas (an aspect of the mind). Thus desiring requires the tools Raga and Manas, besides the energy to desire. The Manas is ever active, attaching itself to something or other. This unceasing activity of the Manas makes life much fuller than it would otherwise be. Once it has got into the habit of attaching itself to a particular thing, it goes up to it even if, later, it is of no value or is even harmful.

## *Tools of Doing*

When the soul conceives a desire, it may follow it up with action. If the desire is to think, the work is done

by the intellect. If the desire is to do some physical action, a large number of tools are involved in the act. Suppose the soul desires to take a book. Then the hand goes towards it, moved by means of impulses sent along certain motor nerves. These, in turn, must be controlled by some organ. Such an organ has not been found in the body and must be a superphysical tool like the organ of sense. Śaiva philosophy calls it the hand-organ.* This organ is controlled by what Śaiva philosophy calls Ahankara (will). This, in turn, works at the instance of the soul. For this, the soul must be supplied with energy, and the Anavic constriction of the ability to do must be counteracted. The counteracting tool is called Kalá. The difference between the stimuli of the organ of sight and of the hand-organ is that the stimulus of the former comes from outside as a light vibration and that of the latter comes from the Ahankara (will). To the class of hand-organ belong the organs that control the work of the mouth, the legs, the excretory organs, and the secretory organs, making five tools in all.

The following sixteen tools are thus found to be necessary for the three activities of the soul to know, to desire, and to do:

1. Five organs of sense.
2. Five organs of action.
3. Three tools for (*a*) thinking, (*b*) desiring, and

* The hand-organ controls not only the motor nerves that move the hands, but also those that cause similar motions, as that of the eyelids.

(*c*) doing, viz. the Buddhi (intellect), the Manas (an aspect of the mind), and the Ahankara (will).

4. Three tools respectively to counteract Anavic constriction, viz. Vidya, Raga, and Kalá.

These are tabulated below.

| Activities | Bodily Tools | Intermediate Tools | Internal Tools | Anti-Anavic Powers |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Knowing | The eye, the ear, etc. | Five organs of sense | Buddhi (intellect) | Vidya |
| Desiring | — | — | Manas | Raga |
| Doing | Hands, legs, etc. | Hand, leg, etc. | Ahankara (will) | Kalá |

## *Tools of Regulation*

There are two powers which we have passed over. We have seen that when we walk along the road many objects catch the eye but only a few are perceived. There must be some power to determine what must be observed or known, what must be desired, and what done. This power is Kála of Śaivaism. This directs the tools that counteract Anavic constriction according to a certain law. The law is that the soul must know, desire, and do what is best for its evolution. This power obeys God's Love, which is the ultimate agent

of evolution. It is assisted by another power which determines the nature of the pain or pleasure that follows the acts of knowing, desiring, and doing. Śaiva philosophy calls this Niyati.

### *The Constituents of the Physical Body*

We have so far analysed the tools of the soul that are not found in the physical body, which is itself a product of Maya. Śaiva philosophy holds that it is composed of five elements, called Bhutas, which also form the physical universe. These elements are made of still simpler ones, called Tanmatras, also five in number. They are supposed to assist the sense organs in differentiating sensations. The Tanmatras, along with the mental organs, form a subtle body in the same way as the five elements form the physical body.

It is now possible to give an account of the evolution of the mental organs, the sense organs, and the two kinds of elements, the Bhutas and Tanmatras. All these come ultimately from a substance called Mulaprakriti (lit. ultimate origin), which evolves into a product called Guna (lit. quality). This is a neutral synthesis of three qualities, which may roughly be called sentience (Satva), motion (Rajas), and insentience (Tamas). All mental and physical products are varying compounds of these three qualities. It has to be remembered in this connection that Śaiva philosophy considers an object to be nothing more than an aggregate of qualities, and that therefore all things,

whether mental or material, are to be regarded as only bundles of qualities.

The first evolute of Guna is the intellect (Buddhi), which comes with a large proportion of sentience (Satva). From this evolves the will (Ahankara) which is predominantly rájasic (motion), and causes action. It has to come from the intellect, perhaps because conation can come only after the decision of the intellect.* From the will comes the Manas (apprehension) and the sense organs, possessing a large proportion of sentience.

The work of the Manas is to catch sensations and to attach itself to things that interest it. Its main activity is thus one of motion, and it must therefore be derived from the will. But as it is concerned with thinking, there is a large proportion of sentience in it. The tools of action are derived also from Ahankara (will), with a very large proportion of Rajas (motion), while the Tanmatras (the subtle elements) come from it with a large proportion of insentience. As they are derived from Ahankara, they are in continual motion.

We have thus been introduced to twelve new products, the five Bhutas, the five Tanmatras, the Guna, and the Mulaprakriti. Śaiva philosophy makes a total of thirty-six by adding six others. One of these is the empirical ego, which is the soul's self-consciousness gained by it when it is able to know, to desire, and to do. The remaining five consist of the different forms

* The conative decision "I will do this" has to follow the intellectual decision "It is desirable to do this."

into which the energies of knowing and doing are supplied to the abilities of the soul. They are (1) energy to know, (2) energy to do, (3) energy to know and to do in equal proportions, (4) more of energy to do and less of energy to know, and (5) more of energy to know and less of energy to do, called respectively, Nada, Bindu, Sadakya, Ishvara, and Shuddha Vidya.

### *Varying Tools of Living Beings*

These thirty-six products of Maya may be divided into three sections. The first of these supplies energy to the soul for its activities of knowing, desiring, and doing. The second consists of two parts, one of which regulates the flow of energy and the other counteracts the constriction of Anava. The third section consists of mental and superphysical tools and the constituents of the body. All living beings are supposed to be endowed with the same thirty-six products, but differ largely in the sensory and motor mechanisms of the physical body. Some animals as well as some men have fewer mechanisms of sense than five.* Plants are supposed to possess only the sense of touch.

When a man is said to die it is only his body that perishes. There is nothing to show that the mental tools also disappear. They are intimately connected with the soul and are in no way dependent on the body. Therefore we have to infer that they remain with the

* We are taught that the evolution of the human body from the protoplasm has been continuous. If, therefore, man has a soul, there is no reason why an animal or a plant should not have one.

soul and are not impaired or removed by the removal of the physical body.*

### *Other Worlds and Beings*

The products of Maya enter into combination to form not only bodies but also worlds. We are aware of the existence of solid worlds like our own and burning, gaseous worlds like stars. There should be liquid and semi-solid worlds, between the gaseous and solid states, in the process of evolution. It may seem impossible that the stars are inhabited. But there are living beings in this world that are capable of living in temperatures varying from near the boiling point to below the freezing point. The possibility of life in such a wide range of temperature permits us to infer the existence of living beings in much higher and lower temperatures. Besides, living beings should not be necessarily restricted to the types we are familiar with in this world, and bodies formed of substances different from those of our own may exist in other worlds. There is nothing to prove or indicate that the existence of such living beings is impossible.

Śaiva philosophy posits the existence in this world itself of beings called ghosts and spirits having light bodies formed of the same five elements. It also speaks of worlds formed of the substance of the mind and of even higher products of Maya inhabited by beings having mental and similar bodies.

* The mental tools, with the Tanmatras, form the subtle body, which is the basis of the next physical body.

New worlds are ever in the making and old worlds are in the process of disintegration. It is said that a time will come when the whole universe will vanish by a process of involution into Maya.

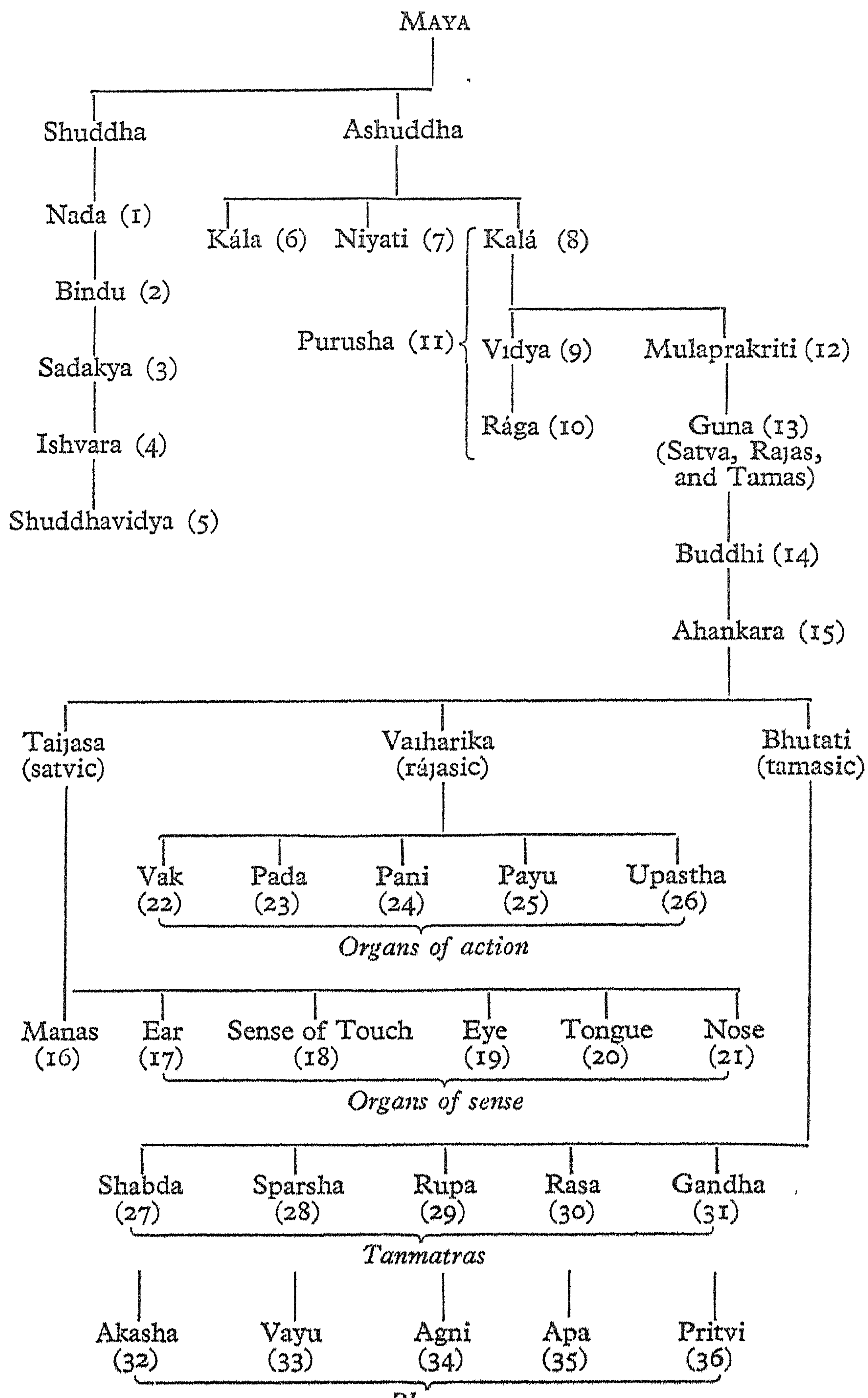
## *Classification of the Products*

It may be useful here to give in a systematic and compact form the thirty-six products that have come from Maya. Maya consists of two parts, the first of which supplies energy and the second the tools. The first part evolves in succession into Nada, Bindu, Sadakya, Ishvara, and Shuddha Vidya. The cause of evolution is the Love of God. The second part consists of two sections, the regulators and the tools. The regulators are Kála, Niyati, Kalá, Vidya, and Raga. To these are added the Empirical ego and Mulaprakriti. The tools evolved from Mulaprakriti consist of:

(*a*) Guna, Buddhi (intellect), Ahankara (will), and Manas (aspect of the mind).
(*b*) The five organs of sense.
(*c*) The five organs of action.
(*d*) The five elements (Tanmatras).
(*e*) The five Bhutas.

The evolution of the products is shown in the next page in the form of a table.

## *Maya*


MAYA
Shuddha
Ashuddha
Nada (1)
Bindu (2)
Sadakya (3)
Ishvara (4)
Shuddhavidya (5)
Kála (6)
Niyati (7)
Kalá (8)
Purusha (11)
Vidya (9)
Mulaprakriti (12)
Rága (10)
Guna (13) (Satva, Rajas, and Tamas)
Buddhi (14)
Ahankara (15)
Taijasa (satvic)
Vaiharika (rájasic)
Bhutati (tamasic)
Vak (22)
Pada (23)
Pani (24)
Payu (25)
Upastha (26)
Organs of action
Manas (16)
Ear (17)
Sense of Touch (18)
Eye (19)
Tongue (20)
Nose (21)
Organs of sense
Shabda (27)
Sparsha (28)
Rupa (29)
Rasa (30)
Gandha (31)
Tanmatras
Akasha (32)
Vayu (33)
Agni (34)
Apa (35)
Pritvi (36)

CHAPTER VII

# THE SOUL

*The conception of the soul—the attributes of the soul—difference in souls—the activities of the soul—the purpose of activity—the succession of births*

## *The Conception of the Soul*

On no other postulate of religion is there so much diversity of views as on the soul. This is because the soul eludes all attempts to discover it, showing itself everywhere and nowhere. It is in conjunction with various things, each of which manifests itself but eclipses this important entity. While in conjunction with the body, the soul gives it life and makes it move. The body and its motion are seen, but the soul is not seen. In conjunction with the mind, it desires and thinks. The acts are attributed to the mind, and the soul is lost in it. As a result of Anavic constriction, it gets such feelings as pride, anger, and lust, which are attributed to the empirical ego. Thus the soul has been identified with the body, the mind, and the empirical ego, and been regarded as a physical or superphysical substance. On the other extremity, it has been identified with the highest entity, God. This is because, like God, and on account of the gifts of God, it has love, light, and lordship. The soul is like the captain of a ship who is not seen by those outside it, though the ship itself is seen and also the sailors. This elusiveness of

the soul has given rise to various theories regarding its nature.

One class of psychologists identify what we call the soul with the mind, and speak of the mind as some mysterious form of cerebral activity. They thus ignore the soul and make a mystery of the mind. Certain classes of philosophers conceive the soul as possessing unlimited energy in addition to the abilities to know, to desire, and to do. With them, the soul is a perfect being by itself, and the imperfection is due to its body and mind. This theory is untenable on several grounds. If the tool is so defective, such a perfect being as the soul is believed to be would not have chosen it; neither could it have been thrust on it by a higher and beneficent being, if it had no choice. Secondly, there is nothing inherent in the tools to confound such a perfect being. This theory does not also explain the possibility of a soul sometimes doing right deeds, and at other times doing wrong deeds. Besides, the body, instead of assisting the soul, is presumed to be a means of doing harm to the soul. There is nothing in the body or in the mind to lead a perfect being to wrongdoing.

Another class of philosophers attributes every kind of perfection to the soul but tacks on to it a free will. They credit the soul with full power to do what is right, but attribute wrongdoing to free-will, which may direct it to do right or wrong. Why, at one time it directs the soul to right and at another to wrong, is not explained. This view also is untenable. A whimsical power is not amenable to any kind of control or

improvement, and gives no scope for evolution. There would then be no goal, no progress, no system. A theory that would lead to such ends can find no place in scientific investigation. On the other hand, the theory of free-will is the foundation and justification for punishments in the sense of penalties. According to this view, it is quite possible for the murderer, the robber, and the incendiarist to have avoided the respective offences.

These and similar conceptions would make the soul a composite entity. As most of the components such as the intellect and the will are subject to changes, the qualities that would be attributed to the soul would also be of a changing character. This would make the soul an indefinite entity, and deprive us of a scientific conception, which is necessary for the formulation of a theory of life. Compositeness is always a bar to the evolution of knowledge. For example, if a body has various accelerated velocities, very little can be known of it if only its resultant velocity at an instant is known. On the other hand, if each velocity is separately known, it will be possible to give a full history of the body's motion. Laws get more accurate as analysis becomes more and more exhaustive. Therefore, if it is possible to isolate the soul from the intellect and other tools, it would be unscientific to consider the soul and its tools as forming a single entity. The soul is therefore conceived in Śaiva philosophy as an entity which has the abilities to know, to desire, and to do. Then it cannot be further analysed or be subject to any change (corollary 1).

## *The Attributes of the Soul*

We have already seen that the soul has only the abilities to know, to desire, and to do. But we also see that it knows, desires, and does. This shows that the soul has also the ability to act when it is provided with the necessary energy and tools. It is this ability which makes its evolution possible. It increases its knowledge and power till they become perfect. The soul may be compared to an engineer and the abilities to the steam engine. We know that the speed, the direction, and the destination of a locomotive engine are subject to change, though neither the engineer nor the engine may undergo any appreciable change.* The changes are caused by the quantity of steam that is supplied, the direction of the rails, and the distance gone through. So, while the soul and its abilities remain unchanged, its activities change as a result of the change in the quantity of the energy supplied and the quality of the tools.

## *Difference in Souls*

We seldom find two men or two other living beings occupying identical situations. There is great difference in the righteousness of men. Some are saintly and some others utterly destitute of the moral sense. The cause of this difference cannot be found in the souls themselves. We have seen that two things can

* The engine, no doubt, gets worn and the engineer tired. But this change has no parallel in the abilities and in the soul, which undergo no change.

differ only in the quality or quantity of their components. But souls are not composite things and therefore have no components. Therefore they must be all alike. If they are all alike, the difference that we notice must be due to extraneous influences. The only permanent extraneous influence is Anava, as Maya comes and goes and so does action. Therefore the difference in the state of souls can be due only to the amount of constriction maintained by Anava. This constriction must be different in different souls. If the constriction is different now, it must have been different in the whole past. Souls are, therefore, at different points in the path of evolution and will continue to occupy different points till their evolution ends, i.e. till they reach the goal. In the path of evolution the speed at any point must be the same for all, because the same, the best facilities are afforded for the progress of all souls. Souls are, therefore, like people who start from different points of a path but travel in exactly similar vehicles to the same destination. But, though we do not see two living beings exactly alike, it does not follow that there cannot be beings exactly in the same position; it is not impossible that a number of souls are exactly in the same condition and reach the goal at the same time. All that we are sure of is that the condition of all souls is not the same.*

* Śaiva philosophy divides souls, according to the power of Anavic grip, into the three classes, Vignanakalar, Pralayakalar, and Sakalar in ascending degrees of the force of the grip.

## *The Activities of the Soul*

The first activity of the soul is knowing. Knowledge is obtained by experience and reasoning. Experience may be either one's own, or that of others obtained by communication. The conditions of other lands are made known to us by those who have seen them. One's own experience may be either of events or of pain and pleasure. The experience of events is ordinarily obtained through the senses. But it is claimed that the mind is not limited by space and can see things beyond the reach of the senses. It is also believed that, in its last stages of evolution, the soul more or less gets out of its restrictions and can see things in their absolute form with the help of the divine light given by God. Every kind of knowledge except the one obtained by the last means is liable to error, as a result of various imperfections such as those in the senses, in memory, and in the method of reasoning.

The next activity of the soul is desiring. To desire is to form a judgment that a certain thing is useful and to attach oneself to it. Before I first desire to have a mango, I form the judgment that it is useful to me, and then attach my Manas to it. If the desire for the mango has got strengthened by repetition, it arises even when it is known to be injurious. The expectation of the well-known pleasure blinds the intellect for the time being and goads the Manas on to it. The Manas is ever active, and this is often a source of great inconvenience, as when we have to check it from its usual wanderings and attach it to something new.

Doing is said to be either voluntary or involuntary,* But what are called involuntary acts were at one time voluntary, but by constant exercise are started without perceptible volition. We are supposed to act against our decision when externally we do not wish to do so. A drinker decides not to drink but does drink. This happens because his decision to give up drinking is ordinarily not quite sincere or final. Where it is sincere, the pleasure associated with drink draws most of the available energy, and the intellect is clouded and gives a wrong decision.

The energy necessary for the activities of the soul, as we have already seen, comes freely from Maya. Anava constricts the abilities, but its efforts are counteracted by Vidya, Raga, and Kalá, which force these energies in, according to the needs of the soul. The energy of knowing passes on to the intellect. It forms judgments and decisions, the correctness and righteousness of which depend upon the available part of its knowledge. Similarly, the energies to desire and to do reach respectively the Manas and the Will, and cause desire and the initiation of action. The organs of senses and actions are ordinarily put in motion by the will. The tools in the physical body obey the behests of the inner organ according to the amount of physical energy available to the tools. A man may like to read for five hours at a stretch, but if the brain is not prepared to spare the necessary energy, he will not be able to read as long as he likes. If when a man wishes to run three miles the body

* These do not include reflex actions.

does not possess the necessary energy, he will have to stop short of the distance. Thus, the actual activity of the man depends partly on the energy supplied to the abilities of the soul and partly on the energy in the body available for use. So far as the quantity of physical work turned out by a person is concerned, it seems to depend entirely on the body. The mental organs seem to depend for energy on the Shuddhamaya, and the supply determines the quality of the work that is done. The greater the energy to know, the more extensive is the knowledge and more accurate is the thinking.

### *The Economy of Energy*

Repetition effects great saving of energy. We require great effort to write a difficult letter of the alphabet for the first time. After a number of repetitions we are able to write it with almost no effort. The sum of two numbers, say 8 and 9, is at first not easily got, but after practice much longer additions are done with very little exertion of the brain. We sometimes read page after page with the mind busy with something else. We are able to get through a chain of actions without our being quite aware of them. These are means of saving mental energy. If it were not for such economy, life would be almost intolerable. But this economy is often as mischievous as it is beneficial. Unkind words are sometimes said and evil deeds are done as the result of this economy, leading to very painful consequences. A large percentage of

the crimes and of praiseworthy acts that are done by us are due to the influence of repetition, which is called habit. When habits get crystallized they almost ignore the intellect and the will, and in the very process of labour-saving they weaken them and even control them, especially in the performance of wrong deeds.

Besides repetition, instincts also are a means of saving energy. These are the results of repetitions not in the present body but in previous bodies in the course of physical evolution. These often assert themselves before the soul can make full use of the intellect and the will, sometimes incapacitate the brain, shut out the intellect, and assume a dictatorial control over human conduct. For example, when a person is insulted by another, his instinct of combat rises with the concomitant of anger, which disorganizes the brain, interferes with clear thinking, and starts the person on to fight. Similarly, the parental instinct is accompanied by tenderness and drives a man to help some one else in danger. The man, in doing so, is not guided by considerations of righteousness or reward, and makes use of the intellect only for devising means of assistance. There are occasions when ratiocination would defeat its own purpose and immediate instinctive action alone would save the situation. Both habits and instincts, while saving the labour of the intellect and the will, also disregard them and even subjugate them.

On the other hand, the will and the intellect can, in certain circumstances, gain mastery over instincts and habits. The problem is entirely a matter of relative

strength and efficiency. The supremacy of the instinct is possible if the intellect and the will are weak and have been allowed to degenerate. But if the soul's powers of knowing and doing are great, the intellect and the will which are fed by them also become powerful, and may not be overruled by instinct or habit. This requires a habit of considerate action and frequent application of the brake on the organs of action when they are under the stimulus of habit or instinct. Then man is said to acquire self-control. When the will is further strengthened, it is able to exercise control even over involuntary organic activities, including the beating of the heart. It is further believed that the will can control other beings, as man and beast and even inanimate objects. If a soul has gained self-control, the intellect assumes sovereign power and is able to dispense with the services of the senses for acquiring information. The senses can only transmit knowledge of objects that are within their reach at a given time. But the sovereign intellect sees the events of all times and of all places.

## *The Purpose of Activity*

The immediate purpose of one's activity is the supply of one's needs. But the ultimate purpose is the attainment of perfection or freedom from Anava. Perfection can be attained only by practice. Every act of practice, till perfection is reached, must necessarily be imperfect. It is imperfect acts, therefore, that lead to a perfect

act. If a perfect act is called a right act, an imperfect act can be called a wrong act. Thus wrong acts lead to right acts and are therefore as useful as right acts. Every activity of a living being, whether right or wrong, leads it to perfection and freedom from Anava. When it has reached perfection, it no longer worries itself with things of the world, but attaches itself to God and becomes divine.

### *Succession of Births*

The progress that the average man makes in his upward march during his lifetime seems to be infinitesimally small. His life is an alternation of right acts and wrong acts. His real character, his power of avoiding wrong deeds, does not undergo much change during a lifetime. If the gain in a single birth is so insignificant, and a soul is so far away from perfection, it follows that a soul must pass through an indefinitely large number of births before it can attain the goal. This is called the doctrine of rebirth. A lifetime can be regarded only as an instant in the period of a soul's evolution. The change of the body makes no more difference to a soul than a change of house makes to an embodied soul. The soul does not, therefore, view with much concern any change of body. All the real knowledge that the soul has acquired and the tendency towards righteousness that its power of desiring has gained, remain for ever with the soul. This accounts for some men being born as saints and geniuses and others as criminals and dullards.

When a body no longer serves the purpose of the soul, it is separated from it, and its place is taken by a fresh body. This new body is the one most helpful to the soul from that instant. Its individual characteristics coupled with those of the family* and the species to which it belongs are just the tools with which the soul is qualified to work from that instant for its self-expression and for the experience of the fruits of certain past actions.

Just as a prince who was living in a palace may have to lodge in an uncomfortable tent in the forest, so a soul which has been using a human body may receive a sub-human body. The body of an animal may be particularly suited to do certain kinds of actions and for experiencing the fruits of certain kinds of past actions. There are authentic stories of animals which have shown greater gentleness and goodness than such human beings as butchers and murderers. These animals are probably more advanced souls than these men, and might have been human beings in previous births. Says Manikavachakar:

> Grass was I, shrub was I, worm, tree,
> Full many a kind of beast, bird, snake,
> Stone, man, and demon. 'Midst thy hosts I served.
> The form of mighty asuras, ascetics, gods I bore.
> Within these immobile and mobile forms of life,
> In every species born, weary I've grown, great Lord!†

The soul has thus to pass through an indefinitely

* This is what is called heredity.
† Thiruvasakam–Shivapuranam (Pope's Translation).

large number of births to remove Anavic constriction and to get full knowledge. On attaining full knowledge, the purpose of its births ceases and hence birth ceases. The soul gets divine illumination and merges in God.

## CHAPTER VIII

# ACTION (KARMA)

*Genesis of action—factors of action—responsibility and punishment—classification of action*

## *Genesis of Action*

Living beings are by nature active.* Life without activity is meaningless. The mind is incessantly active except during deep sleep. The brain, which is the mind's tool, must be equally active. Various other parts of the body work as occasion requires. At the base of this unceasing activity of mind and body are the soul's needs. It is to supply those needs that the body and mind are so active. But there are some who hold that living beings work because they possess energy, that when they have a superfluous supply they work even in the absence of special needs, and that when the supply is deficient their work is not sufficient even to supply their needs. This view is doubly wrong. Energy is a means for work and is not its cause. Secondly, from what has been shown, the supply of energy does not come by chance but is regulated so as to ensure the maximum evolution of the soul. It can therefore be neither too much nor too little, but must be exactly what the soul requires.

The ordinary needs of a living being are threefold,

* There is a school of philosophy which posits an eternal entity called Karma (lit. action) which makes the soul active.

bodily, mental, and social. The first two are necessary to the being as a mere individual, and the third to the being as a member of society. The needs of the body are food, sleep, escape from danger, and sexual enjoyment.* Of these four, the first three are necessary for the protection of the body, and the last for that of the race. Mental needs are knowledge and recreation, the former for enriching the mind, and the latter for relief from strenuous work. Social needs include giving and receiving help, loving and hating, dominating and submitting. Some souls have recognized the existence of God and have established a relationship with Him. This relationship causes another set of needs called religious needs which also cause action for their supply.

## *Factors of Action*

The direction of action, as we all know, is given largely by imitation. Even intelligent men are not altogether free from its influence. An extended form of imitation is the adoption of local, social, or religious customs. In both these cases the doer gives no thought to the desirability or otherwise of the acts concerned. Few of the butchers of Chicago would ever have thought of the unrighteousness of slaughtering hundreds of innocent animals every day. Professional thieves do not feel the iniquitousness of their means of livelihood. It is when the average man has to go out of the beaten

* St. Appar says, "The worm has four instincts, the same have I."

track that he gets a chance* to pause and consider the rightness or wrongness of an act.

To discuss problems of right and wrong, one must have the criterion of right and wrong, and the skill to apply it to individual cases. The criterion may be either a single rule which defines right action or a list of such actions. The knowledge and the skill depend partly on the tools of knowledge and partly on the amount of energy supplied to the soul. Of these, the tools and the energy are products of Maya, but the quantity of energy is determined by Anava.

Even if a correct judgment has been formed regarding the righteousness of an act, it is not invariably translated into action. Some judgments are only of academic interest and do not enter into problems relating to life. The teachings of great men are studied rather for the acquisition of knowledge than for influencing conduct. "Love thy neighbour as thyself," "Love them that hate you," are maxims which cannot be practised by all. Judgments based on such teachings cannot compel action. But judgments based on past experience are dynamic. The experience may be one of pleasure or pain, which forms an important factor in life and hence in determining action. The form of pleasure that influences action varies with different individuals. With one man, sense-pleasure may be paramount. With another, sense-pleasure is of no consequence; the pleasure of self-sacrifice sways him. To another, even the thought of self-sacrifice is repul-

* There are many who are strangers to considerations of right and wrong, and are guided solely by expediency.

sive; he finds pleasure in doing good for its own sake, without the consciousness of having made any sacrifice for the good of others. Judgments resulting from such experiences do influence action. But the amount of experience necessary for determining an act varies in individuals according to their wisdom and love of pleasure. A single experience is enough to convince a child of the harmful nature of fire, because its attractive power is immediately counteracted by the effect of a burn. But the moth is not convinced of it even after several experiences. Every time it gets singed, it flies away from it, but sooner or later returns to it. Even such closely repeated experiences are not enough to convince it of the danger.* We shall consider a few typical errors and attempt to diagnose them.

1. Suppose a boy who has a great fancy for a fountain pen sees his classmate's pen on his desk and finds that he can take it without being seen by anyone. He has never entertained any thought of stealing a fountain pen, but the favourable circumstances tempt him to misappropriate the pen. In this case, the pleasure of using the pen, which comes from Anava,† is the ultimate cause of the act. The provoking cause is the presence of the pen and the absence of other people, both of which may be traced to Maya. He is one who does not very much trouble himself with the problem of right and wrong.

* St. Manickavachakar has compared man's pursuit of unwholesome pleasure to the moth's attraction for light.

† Insufficiency of knowledge caused by Anava leads a person to regard such possession as an end in itself, and to find pleasure in getting it.

2. Let us take the case of a rich man who is not willing to feed a starving beggar. This man tells himself, "Our religion, no doubt, says that we should help the poor. But if I give him something to alleviate his suffering I lose so much. Why should I lose it? I would rather have it. If I were in his position, I would certainly very much like to be helped. But, fortunately, I am not in his position. Therefore I will not help him." Here is a man who has learnt that a hungry beggar should be helped. But his knowledge does not influence conduct, as it was not gained by experience. The primitive element of egoism holds complete sway over the man. This, we have already seen, is a product of Anava. But suppose his wife persuades him to offer some help and he gives him some food. The beggar takes the food and expresses his gratitude to him. The man sees that the loaf of bread he gave the beggar has caused great relief to him and makes him happy. The sight of his relief and the show of gratitude, which is flattering to him, are new experiences which confirm the soundness of his wife's advice and the rightness of his act. These form a new factor which, on future occasions, will plead for the relief of the poor. Experience thus succeeds where mere knowledge has failed.

3. Suppose a young man is preparing for a competitive examination. Instead of learning his lessons, he spends his time in feasts and festivals or in wandering and sight-seeing. His father and teacher explain to him that his way of life is fatal to his interests. He does not listen to them because the pleasure he experiences

in his way of life works against the acceptance of their advice. He deceives himself by the prospect of getting through his studies in a few days. But when he fails in the examination and loses the coveted post, he is disillusioned. Immediate pleasure has, in this instance, blinded the boy to the gravity of the situation and has acted as a bar to the acceptance of a correct judgment. The man who declined to help the beggar was clear-headed, but did not realize the value of the teaching. This boy knows the truth but is blind to his limitations. The abnormal value attached to immediate pleasure owes its origin to ignorance of great truths, which may be traced to Anavic influence.

4. Leaving these mild cases of wrongdoing, we may proceed to such serious offences as murder, incendiarism, and robbery. These constitute extreme violence to the person and property of others and proceed from egoism of a rabid type. A murders B for no other reason than that the latter has insulted him or some one dear to him, or has thwarted some pet project of his. Taking away a man's life for such trivial offences means setting an unlimited value on one's self and no value on one's equal. This is egoism, pure and simple, the first fruit of Anava.

Besides egoism and immediate pleasure which prevent right action by forming an incorrect judgment, there are forces that prevent the very formation of a considered judgment. Narcotics and alcoholic drinks derange the cerebrum and suspend the normal activity of the intellect and lead to wrong action. Hunger and certain states of ill-health impair the functions

of the brain, which thus proves false to its lord, the intellect. Certain emotions also produce similar effects. Lust and anger, sorrow and fear, often disorganize the brain and lead to acts which one would not do in the normal state. These proceed from the body and owe their origin to Maya.

If, after due deliberation, a decision has been arrived at regarding a course of action, such deliberation is dispensed with for the repetition of the act, unless fresh circumstances arise which compel reconsideration. During repetition, the effort necessary for the action gradually diminishes, and after several repetitions the act becomes what is called a habit. If the habit crystallizes, action becomes mechanical and can be performed almost unconsciously. Later, the habit becomes the master and compels action, even against pious resolves to give it up.

A drinker, for example, has found great pleasure in drink, but has seen that its evil effects far outweigh the pleasurable experiences. He resolves to give up drink. But when his hour of drink comes, he goes out ostensibly for a walk, but really towards a liquor shop. The sight of it starts the desire to drink and leads him on to the shop. Just before he enters the shop, the thought of the resolve may come to him. The thought is of no consequence to him. He goes up to the bottle, even if someone reminds him of his resolve. The pleasure that drink has given stands before him in full force and fills his mind. His previous resolve cannot therefore be considered, and is thrown in the background. He goes and drinks. When the drink and its

effects are over, he feels very sorry for having broken his resolve, curses himself, and makes a stronger resolve not to take liquor again. His success next time is in no way assured. With some it is impossible to break a habit. The sight of liquor or even the thought of it starts the action necessary for obtaining a drink. Just as when a clock is wound, a slight push to the pendulum sets all the wheels in motion and ultimately the hands of the clock, so also when a habit has been formed, even a thought or suggestion is enough to start an action and carry it through. If the action is right it is all the better, but if it is wrong it is so much the worse. The chief factors in the formation of habits are the conditions of the body and the provoking external stimuli, which are products of Maya. Thus the factors of action, whatever form it may assume, are Anava and Maya.

But we know that Anava and Maya are entities different from the soul and independent of it. As these are the ultimate causes of action, it follows that the soul cannot be held responsible for any of its acts, and that no being can be blamed or praised for what it has done. Still, the State holds that the doer of an offence is responsible for the act and ought to be punished* for breaking the law and not for mending

* Punishments are either retributive, exemplary, or deterrent. Retributive punishment is brutal. This consists in "pulling an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth." But a great Tamil ethical work says, "We have seen no man biting a dog which has bitten him." There is no rationality at all in retributive punishment. If a man has given me a blow, there is no sound reason why he should receive from me a

his future life. This opinion is echoed by society. In dealing with crime, neither the State nor society has shown itself to have emerged from savagery even in the most enlightened parts of the world. Equally helpless is the old-fashioned schoolmaster. If a boy has not learnt his lesson, he punishes him. The pupil has failed to learn his lesson because his lesson was too difficult for him, or he was unwell and was unable to prepare the work at home, or was too busy with more urgent work at home or got into the company of boys who wasted their time. The want of preparation was certainly not due to any itching for a caning.

A greater sinner in this respect is the parent who makes rules for his little children which are only good for saints, and punishes them with unerring precision. The child should never tell a lie, but the father may lie *ad libitum.* These so-called offenders are no more guilty than those who fall ill. Just as the criminal has broken the laws of the land, the pupil the laws of the school, and the child the order of the parent, so the sick man has broken the laws of health. If the physician should be as irrational as the State, the teacher, or the parent, he would punish the sick man for having

similar blow. Exemplary punishment is worse. In this form of punishment, a man is punished so that others may be frightened by it and be deterred from committing the same or similar crime. In other words, a man is punished for the benefit of others. Deterrent punishment alone has justification, as it is intended to prevent a person from repeating an offence and to make him a better man. This is not punishment in the sense of penalty.

broken the laws of health. Fortunately for the sick, the physician is a rational man. He carefully diagnoses the disease and assaults the disease instead of assaulting the patient. The infliction of pain is no doubt useful as a preventive of its recurrence. But what is still more important is that the cause of the crime must be diagnosed and removed by suitable treatment. The crime is as often physiological* as psychological, and can be eradicated only by carefully thought-out remedies.

If we are driven to the conclusion that no living being does anything that is blameworthy, it may be asked whether a philosophy which exonerates criminals does not encourage and increase crime, and if it does so, whether it is not a proof of its unsoundness. It does not by itself encourage crime. On the other hand, making a gentleman of a criminal will only tend to make him a gentleman. Our criminal law has created more criminals than perhaps even Anava. Law Courts brand good men as criminals for some trifling error of judgment, and make them greater criminals by hardening them. Once they get hardened, they freely resort to wrongdoing, finding pride in law-breaking and pleasure in being above the law. On the other hand, the sympathetic treatment prescribed by philosophy is sure to win over the misguided and make them better men than even those who have not erred at all.

* The Hindu Shastras prohibit the use of certain foods, such as flesh and fish, as creating criminal tendencies. Certain physiological conditions are believed to be pregnant causes of crime.

# *Action (Karma)*

## *Classification of Action*

We have seen that no man is to blame and that all are good. It is equally true that all the acts also are good. All living beings are by nature good. It is only when they are crossed that they fail to be good in the popular sense. But even when they are not good in the ordinary sense, they are really and truly good. What is goodness? It is not the possession or the acquisition of wealth or learning, which come and go and are immaterial to the soul. It is not keeping the body safe and unhurt, as bodies also are material possessions. Goodness comes of the acquisition of real truths, truths which are capable of saving the soul from error. Badness would then mean the loss of such truths. Such truths are never lost. Therefore badness is impossible. If badness is impossible, there must be stagnation or goodness. Stagnation is equally impossible as activity is the characteristic of life. Therefore the soul can acquire only goodness, and whatever it does must be good. If A robs B, the latter loses a part of his wealth, which is of no consequence to the soul, and therefore practically loses nothing. Therefore A is not bad. On the other hand, the robbery is a means of A's acquiring real knowledge. He experiences the painful consequences of robbery and arrives at the eternal truth that robbery is a wrong act. B also gets some real knowledge by his loss. He sees that he deserves the loss, that he has done some wrong to deserve it, and that wrong acts are undesirable.

But, though all men are good and all their acts are

good, it does not follow that all acts are equally right.* If a child says that three times five is eight, the child is good and the act is good, and there is no doubt that the answer is wrong. The child is good because it does what it can. The act is good because it is an occasion for the child to understand clearly what three times five is. But no one will say that the child is right. So, actions can be wrong or right, and the classification of actions on this basis is quite sound. The question therefore arises, What is right? A living being has certain rights; respecting them is right and violating them is wrong. A man has a right for the safety of his body and for the use of his possessions. To hurt his body or deprive him of his possessions would be wrong. This is the popular conception of right and wrong.

Śaiva philosophy defines right as that which does lasting good to the soul. I-ness and My-ness, which are the first fruits of Anavic constriction, are the greatest evils of the soul, and any act that results from the counteraction of either of these is good to the soul, and is therefore right. What are ordinarily called selfish acts are wrong, and others including acts of self-sacrifice are right. It is such acts that find a place in ethical codes. But these acts are only relatively right, as they proceed on the assumption that the soul is the ultimate reality. The right deed according to this view is called Pashu Karma (lit. soul action) and belongs to the intermediate stage. But the soul is not the ultimate reality, and the definition of right and wrong based

* An act is right if it conforms to an accepted standard.

on a wrong theory cannot be correct. The ultimate reality is God, and what is of lasting good to the soul is its realization of God. Every act that tends to the soul's realization is right in the absolute sense. The thought of God, praise of God, the love of God, the recognition of God's presence in all living beings, and acts that arise from such recognition are absolutely right deeds. They are called Pati Karma (lit. God action).

Higher than these are the acts of those who have completely killed I-ness and My-ness by temporary or permanent union with God. These do not recognize their acts as theirs, because they have no idea of themselves and think of God in the first person. Their acts may be called acts of detachment.

Acts can thus be classified into wrong acts, relatively right acts,* right acts,† and acts of detachment.‡ The first three are performed respectively by those who regard the body, the soul, and God as ultimate realities, and the last by those who have no distinction of realities and unrealities and who have almost reached the goal.

* Śaiva ethics classifies relatively right acts into those of commission and of omission. Of the former, five are compulsory and are the five duties (Pancha Yagnas) given in Chapter XIII. Other right acts of commission are loving, forbearing, being just, speaking kind words, helping those in distress, and so on. The acts of omission include not coveting other's belongings, not forgetting other's kindness, not eating flesh or fish, not taking intoxicants, not committing adultery, and so on.

† Right acts are those included in Charya, Kriya, and Yoga, a full account of which is given in Chapter XV.

‡ These may also be called unethical, ethical, super-ethical, and spiritual acts respectively.

## CHAPTER IX

# THE LAW OF ACTION (THE LAW OF KARMA)

*The law—the method of operation—the time of operation—channels of operation—the effects of the law on life*

### *The Law*

The law of action may be stated as follows: "Right action leads to pleasure and wrong action to pain." The truth of the law finds ample testimony in experience. Those who do right derive the happiness that comes from the consciousness of doing right, besides being honoured by society and often receiving the direct return for their righteous deeds. On the other hand, the wrongdoer gives pain to his own mind after the commission of the offence, is despised by society, and is often punished by other men or the State. But there are many on both sides who appear to be unaffected by the law of action.

Closer and longer observation shows, however, that most of those who throve on wrong acts have ultimately suffered enough, and that those who endured untold hardships as the result of a right course of life have been more than rewarded for their adherence to virtue. Stories contained in our Puranas and Ithihasas, tragedies and comedies, demonstrate the belief in the infallibility of the law of action.

Instances are not wanting in history. Napoleon and Alexander the Great, Kaiser William II and Akbar, Marlborough and Gladstone, illustrate by their lives the two sides of the law of action. If the mighty intellect and steady heart could not save Napoleon from ruin, it is hard to think of any other human being who can withstand the painful consequences of unrighteous life. In Shakespeare's words, "The whirligig of time brings in his revenges," and the "engineer is hoist with his own petard."

The world is bent on teaching a lesson to the wrong-doer. The man who does wrong once in a way may escape detection. But the habitual wrongdoer cannot conceal his identity for long. When he is found out he gets his due. If a wrongdoer is not found out in the first instance, the success is an incentive to the repetition of the offence. This leads to the continuance of the wrong act, which makes the wrongdoer a habitual criminal. A bully first ill-treats weaklings and then learns to offend others. Among the latter comes a more powerful man than he who brings him to his senses.

Wrongdoing is thus usually followed by suffering, but right action gives pleasure at all times. The satisfaction of doing what is right is itself a source of great pleasure. This pleasure leads to the intense pursuit of right action, which gives a rich harvest of joy and pleasure. The nature of living beings is such that they like the righteous and dislike the evil-minded, with the result that society itself endeavours to administer the law of action. But it cannot be said that every act gets its full return in this birth itself.

The truth of the law is warranted not only by observation but also by the course of evolution. If a person were not to experience pain as the result of wrongdoing, he would not desist from it and would not advance along the path of evolution. Similarly, unless a righteous act is followed by pleasure, righteousness would not receive acceleration, and the tendency of man might even cause retardation.

Besides, we have seen that all souls are in the hands of God. As God's Love is perfect, it must be able to give them maximum evolution in a given time. Therefore, the utmost use will be made of every action of each soul and none will be left to chance. The law of action must therefore be infallible.

It is often asked whether the law applies also to those who cannot discriminate between right and wrong. The butcher does not realize that it is wrong to kill animals. The hardened criminal has no respect for others' rights. The old-fashioned teacher does not know that flogging boys is wrong. Do these men suffer for their acts? This question is asked on the assumption that sufferings are punishments. Our philosophy rejects the idea of punishments, and holds that misapprehension is the chief cause of wrongdoing. The question has, therefore, already been answered. The purpose of suffering is the removal of mistaken notions. Suffering must, therefore, follow acts caused by wrong notions. It is true that society views with leniency acts due to wrong judgments. But as we have to live with other beings, it is our first duty to study the rights of others, and failing in our

first duty is a great offence. It is far better to do a wrong knowing it to be wrong than to regard it as a right action. The man who is mistaken does wrong every time he finds an occasion to do it, and becomes a habitual offender. But the knowing man does wrong only when he is compelled by circumstances, and is therefore comparatively free from it. Ignorance, instead of being an excuse for wrongdoing, is an offence of the first magnitude.

### *The Method of Operation*

An act by itself is incapable of producing the pleasure or pain mentioned by the law. It has the usual physical and mental effects which are different from the pleasure or pain experienced on account of it. For example, if I gave a hungry man what I had for my breakfast, the effect of it to me is starvation. If I keep awake the whole night to attend on a sick person, the effect is discomfort to the body. On the other hand, when I wish the downfall of my enemy I derive joy from it. If I have stolen a money bag, I derive pleasure by spending the money as I please. In these circumstances, pain comes from right action and pleasure from wrong action. These effects do not accord with the law of action. Therefore the acts themselves cannot produce the consequences required by the law. It is worked, as everything else, by the direction of God's Love. It has so planned the evolution of the Universe that every one experiences the fruit of his act in circumstances that will give him true knowledge.

Every act of ours leaves an impression in the intellect like the sounds that make marks in gramophone records. When I help the hungry man, the act brightens the intellect. When I seek the downfall of my enemy, though the satisfaction of my revengeful spirit appears on the surface, a deep blot is made in the mind caused by the subconscious feeling of meanness engendered by it. These marks are believed to form the seeds of pleasure or pain which the law of action gives. Just as moisture is necessary to make a seed sprout up, so some agent is necessary to work on the impressions in the intellect to cause pain and pleasure. Śaiva philosophy says that Kála and Niyati are the agents which lead the intellect to a set of circumstances where the soul can get the fruits of a particular past action.

### *The Time of Operation*

The fruits of action must be experienced at such time and in such circumstances as will give the soul maximum advantage for evolution. We ourselves take this precaution when we try to mend our subordinates. When they have done some wrong, we take care to see that the circumstances in which they are placed are favourable to their correction. In an unfavourable set of circumstances, the subordinates may be driven to desperation and pay no heed to our correction, or may be in a position of advantage which enables them to disregard the admonition. There must be analogous circumstances when the soul

would not derive the fullest benefit of the experience of pain or pleasure. Therefore Kála and Niyati* give the soul the fruits of its acts at the most opportune moment, after the lapse of varying periods of time. Some acts may fructify almost immediately, and some others after several years or even births.

Acts may therefore be classified into three groups, according to the time of their fructification. Some acts bring their fruits in this birth itself, and some others in subsequent births. There must also be acts whose fruits are experienced partly in this birth and partly hereafter.† Therefore the acts whose effects are experienced in a birth are partly of those of previous births and partly of those of the particular birth.

## *Channels of Operation*

The law of action operates in three distinct channels in the course of a single life. The first of these consists of the circumstances of birth. These are the effects of action performed in the previous birth or births. Herein is concentrated a very large volume of effects. The body, the brain, the parents, and the time and place of birth determine the life of a person more than any other set of circumstances. A strong and healthy body would give a soul a widely different

* See page 81.

† These are respectively called drishtam, adrishtam, and drishtadrishtam, which respectively mean (those whose effects are) visible, not visible, and partly visible and partly not visible.

course of life from that determined by a weak and sickly body. There is no comparison between the life of a man endowed with the vigorous brain of a Huxley or a Kelvin and that of a man possessing a weak *pia mater*. The endocrinal glands that are formed at birth exert considerable influence on the life of a man and contribute largely to his happiness or unhappiness. The nature of the parents and their culture go a great way to determine the future happiness of the man. A fond mother spoils the child as much as a cruel father, and a spoilt child is spoiled for ever. Wealth and poverty at birth have their own influence over the whole life. The culture of the time and place of birth is shared by the child and is one of the factors shaping its career. The nature of the happiness of a child born in a highly intellectual society is different from that of a child born in the society of savages. Everything that a soul gets at birth influences the whole life, and contributes largely to the happiness and unhappiness experienced during the whole lifetime. But once we are born, we are no longer concerned as to what we are born with or how we got them. We can then afford to ignore the contribution of our past actions and the circumstances in which we are born, and view life like a rationalist or any other non-believer in past births.

This leads us to the second channel of the effects of our actions. In this, we experience the effects of actions performed in this birth itself. A portion of the acts done in a birth produce effects in that birth. While the possessions of a soul at birth form its capital,

its acts in the course of its life are its business transactions. Just as the prosperity of a business depends as much on the skill of management as on the capital, so the happiness of a man depends on his acts during life as much as on his inheritance. A man born with a strong and healthy body may so behave as to make the body weak and sickly, and vice versa. A man born in a rich family may become a beggar, and one born poor may become a millionaire. These are caused by long chains of actions done in the present birth. Apart from such accumulated effects caused by a long series of acts, we find the law operating in individual acts. The man who helps a beggar out of sheer pity gets joy of a high type from his act of self-sacrifice. This joy is a portion of the fruits of the act and is experienced immediately after the act. When a man undergoes hardships to maintain a high standard of morality, the hardships themselves are a source of joy. Besides, he enjoys an exalted form of freedom to do right in the face of difficulties. He fears no one, and feels as if he were "the monarch of all he surveys."

Just as virtue is its own reward, so vice has its own punishment. Observe the state of a man in rage. His mind undergoes temporary derangement. He loses control over himself. He behaves like a beast. He makes a poor show. He loses respect. He loses enormous nervous energy. At the end of his rage, he finds himself much poorer in many respects. The law of action has operated immediately. "Pride goes before a fall" is a well-known proverb. The avaricious man is not happy. Tyrants are known to have lost not only their

kingdoms but even their lives. A tyrant is a slave turned inside out. Though he may not undergo visible sufferings, he certainly has endless fears and worries. The envious man gains nothing by his malevolence but loses much in happiness. Wrongdoers are subjected to pain by law courts and society. But the amount of pain inflicted on them may not always be exactly equivalent to that which the law of action would give them. If the pain is greater, as is often the case, the excess is due to some other action, and if less the deficit will be made up later.

The third channel of the result* of action is the occasional assertion in this birth of the results of acts of past births. Its interference is seen when a wrong act is followed by pleasure and a right act by pain. A boy robs another of his money. The direct effect* of robbery is the acquisition of wealth. Wealth by itself is desirable and is a means of getting pleasure. But according to the law of action, robbery is not, and cannot be, a cause of pleasure. Therefore the acquisition of wealth cannot be said to be the result* of robbery. If the boy had been following a wrong course of life, there could have been no act of this birth which, according to the law of action, would have given him the wealth. It therefore follows that the wealth came as the result of some action of a previous birth. Again, innocent men have been sent to jail. The great sufferings and persecutions to which saintly men have been

* To avoid confusion, the word "result" is used to denote the result according to the law of action and the word "effect" to denote the ordinary sequel of an action.

subjected while engaged in righteous acts could not be the results of such acts. These can be the results of acts either of the early part of the present birth or of the previous births. Some of these men have all along been leading strictly virtuous lives. Therefore these sufferings cannot be the results of acts done in the early part of their lives. These must hence be the results of acts of previous births. Acquisition of wealth by legacies and discovery of treasure troves can also be explained only as results of acts of past births. These are instances of past actions producing their results occasionally in this birth.

## *The Effects of the Law on Life*

### (*a*) INDUCEMENT TO DO MAXIMUM WORK

The law of action gives a definite relationship between an action and its effects. It says that no labour is lost, and nothing can be gained without labour. Since no labour is lost, a man is induced to do as much work as he can. Some men have few needs and when they are satisfied they may not exert themselves any more. They may have plenty of energy but find no inducement for further work. But the knowledge of the law of action can make them do more work. The law says that if they help others they will be rewarded later for that help. They may get it in this birth itself. This is an incentive to further exertion and to helping others.

There are some others who, not being used to hard work, delude themselves into the belief that their energy is exhausted when their daily round of work is over. If they realize the truth of the law of action, they will considerably increase the daily output and lead more useful and happy lives.

Besides, acts of past births may bring on misfortune at any time. If people wish to make sure of a comfortable life in the future, they must have a large margin of wealth. This they can have only by hard work. So, those who are keen on leading a comfortable life are compelled by the law of action to work as hard as they can. Most people can increase their output of work. If they do so, the effects of past actions can be minimized and they can be much more comfortable than otherwise. The amount of happiness experienced in this birth can be put in the form of an equation. If the total happiness experienced in a birth is called Y, the happiness due to acts of past births C, and that due to acts of the present birth X, we have the equation

$$Y = X + C$$

In this equation C is a constant quantity and X is a variable depending on the will of a person to do right and useful work. Therefore Y, which is their sum, is also a variable. Y depends on X, and increases as X increases. From this equation we see at a glance the necessity for making X as great as possible.

Hard work often leads to righteousness. We have seen that unrighteous acts are sometimes caused by the insufficient output of energy. If a person is

prepared to put forth as much energy as he can, he will be free from that kind of unrighteousness which is caused by its insufficiency. A hard-working man has no need to rob or cheat. If he puts forth sufficient energy, he can keep his temper under control and make himself more agreeable to others than otherwise. He can afford to be kind and considerate towards others. In other words, he can be a righteous man. Thus the knowledge of the law of action makes a man not only energetic and hard-working, but also righteous.

### (*b*) INDUCEMENT FOR DOING MAXIMUM OF DESIRABLE ACTS

We have seen that our possessions at birth are determined by our past actions. These form the capital of a man's life and are an important factor in bringing about inequality in the happiness of different persons. During birth, some acquire a predisposition for certain dangerous diseases, some others are deprived of the sense of sight or the power of speaking. Some are placed in miserable and poverty-stricken homes with hardly any provision for food or protection from the rigours of the weather. On the other hand, some are born free from congenital taint, with all the sense organs in perfect condition, rolling in wealth, comfort, and happiness. Observing such differences from day to day and knowing that these inequalities are due to past acts, one would ordinarily strive to do desirable acts and avoid undesirable ones. Every misfortune that befalls us can be a power for putting us in the right path so as to make our future at least tolerably happy.

Every stroke of good luck can be an encouragement to be good and to do good.

(*c*) PROMOTION OF PEACE OF MIND AND SOCIAL HARMONY

According to the law of action, every suffering to which we are subject has been caused by our own acts. Therefore we need not feel sorry for these sufferings. We can bravely meet them and try to remove them by our exertion. Some people waste much time over the thought of the misfortune that has befallen them and foolishly add unavailing sorrow to the suffering. The believer in the law of action sees that he richly deserves it and maintains peace of mind. He has no fear. He does not die a thousand times before his death. He knows he will get only what he deserves. Instead of fearing, he makes an effort to avoid a calamity. No one can be harmed except by himself. If he has been wronged by another person, he thinks that the wrong was the effect of his own action, regards the wrongdoer only as the channel of the suffering due to him, throws no blame on him, and seeks no revenge. He is free from anger. More than ninety-nine per cent. of the social and political troubles in our countries are caused by not realizing the law of action. If a person unjustly wrongs me, I must certainly endeavour to prevent the recurrence of the wrong; but I need not retaliate. For retaliation is wrongdoing, and according to the law of action, if one retaliates one will have to suffer for the retaliation itself. This will mean increase of suffering in the endeavour to prevent

suffering. Similarly, the man who is placed in favourable circumstances can see that his position is due to right action in the past birth, and may be induced to make good use of his wealth and position instead of being intoxicated by them and making them a means for unduly asserting his superiority over others and doing injury to them.

Again, some do good to others expecting good from them. When they find that these are not grateful, they give up doing good and sometimes make enemies of these people. The law of action does not encourage commercial charity of this kind. It says, "Do good and you will get good, but not necessarily from the same person. The coconut-tree which takes water through its roots gives milk in return through its top, but not through the roots. If, therefore, one member of society receives help from you, some other member may give you the reward. Therefore, do not expect gratitude but continue your acts of charity even to the most ungrateful man." Some render service and do not get adequate return and therefore slacken their work. A hard-working teacher does not sometimes get the salary he deserves, and being ignorant of the law of action, gets discontented, tells himself that much less work will do for his pay, and does injustice to his boys and to the school. The law of action will give him in a few months the fruit of his changed course of action. It will take away his good name, bring discredit on him, and may even deprive him of his means of livelihood. On the other hand, the believer in the law of action does not limit the source

of his reward to the school manager's dole but works harder and harder. He finds his merit recognized sooner or later and may be rewarded for the past as well as for the present. He is happy and contented, and lives in harmony with all others.

The knowledge of the law of action thus frees a man from the unedifying inquiry, "Will it pay?" The law has fixed the real fruit, which we are often unable to identify. The best course, therefore, is not to try to find out the fruits, but to be sure of having them and to continue to work with undiminished ardour. The law of action leads to the higher law, "Do your duty without caring for the fruit." Great saints and martyrs who have undergone endless hardships in the pursuit of their ideals are the products of this law. The world would not have had them if they had not been guided by this principle. The law of action thus makes men industrious, righteous, forbearing, noble, and saintly.

CHAPTER X

# THE GOAL

*Liberation from Anava—liberation from Maya—liberation from Action—merging in Love of God*

## *Liberation from Anava*

The goal of the soul has been shown to be its liberation from Anava. In dealing with the goal, we have only to find out the effects and the concomitants of such liberation. The first fruits of Anava are the feelings of I-ness and My-ness. Therefore a person who has attained liberation from Anava has neither I-ness nor My-ness, and does not refer to himself as an individual. He has neither pride nor anger, neither sorrow nor fear. He has no thought of his body, his family, his property, and other things that are ordinarily supposed to belong to him. The direct effect of freedom is the free flow of energies to know, to desire, and to do. The liberated soul therefore possesses unlimited knowledge. It can transcend time and see the past, the present, and the future events in the universe, though it does not, as it has no concern with them. It is also able to know the true nature of itself, of Maya, and of Anava. As its I-ness has disappeared, it has no desire for its own sake. As it can get unlimited energy to do, it can do everything that can possibly be done. But, as it desires nothing for itself, it does not do anything for its own sake.

## *Liberation from Maya*

The products of Maya serve only as means for the soul's activities of knowing, desiring, and doing. As the liberated soul has nothing in this world to know, to desire, or to do, these tools are no more of any use to it. So the soul may give them up as soon as it attains liberation, that is, it may leave the physical body, the mind, etc. It therefore needs no place to live in, or things to enjoy, and gets completely out of the domain of Maya. But some souls do not give them up immediately. These are called Jıvanmuktas, that is those who are liberated and still live in bodies. These are the souls that reveal the ultimate truths of religion to those who need them. We know of ordinary men called priests who profess to lead others to liberation. They are but blind leaders of the blind. They are themselves not liberated, are therefore ignorant of ultimate truths, and can give little help to others. The liberated man alone possesses the necessary knowledge and is able to assist others in their endeavours to attain liberation. He is therefore indispensable to them. The Love of God, in directing the universe, so arranges evolution that some become Jivanmuktas and supply this great need of other souls. But these souls are in no way influenced by their mind or body. Having seen the true nature of Maya, they cannot be affected by such an insignificant product of it as their body or mind.

## *Liberation from Action*

The performance of action is necessary to the unliberated soul for the acquisition of real truths by experiencing the effects of action. As the liberated soul requires no further knowledge, it need not perform any fresh action, and is therefore free from the need for indulging in activity for its own sake. As regards the fruits of past actions, they must all have been experienced except perhaps those that determined the nature of the body. If the body perishes at liberation, it means that all the fruits of past actions have been experienced. If it does not, it follows that there are some acts left whose fruits it has yet to experience.* So there are two classes of liberated souls: (1) those that leave the body at liberation, and (2) those that continue with the body even after liberation. The latter are the Jivanmuktas.

## *Merging in Love of God*

When the soul is liberated from the limitations due to Anava, it can receive a full flow of energy from Maya and acquire omniscience. But, if it is deprived of or liberated from Maya also, it cannot know or do anything. It is quiescent. Then the Love of God

* These acts must be such as are on the borderland between right and wrong and therefore produce little effect. For, the Jivanmuktas are not susceptible to pleasure and pain, and the acts whose fruits they have to experience must be such as can produce little effect.

comes to it directly and fills it with divine illumination and makes it one with God. In this state the soul enjoys perpetual bliss. It does not see itself or the universe except as God. As God, it sees God. The seer, the seen, and the sight become one with Him who makes the seer see.

Jivanmuktas, who are merged in the infinite love of God, shower love on the unliberated ones. A great saint says, "The Jivanmuktas' only care, if care it can be called, is the upliftment of the blind, blundering souls that are bound in sin." Some Jivanmuktas remain in their original positions as kings, statesmen, or householders, and make themselves useful to large numbers of people by their lives and their acts. Some become religious preachers and tour round the country attracting disciples and followers who try to walk in their footsteps and are helped by them in their course of life. But, in the midst of these activities, they remain unaffected, all the acts being automatic and unattached.

Their chief value to unliberated souls is the dual position they occupy. They are man and God in one, and are useful to men in both capacities. As they have been men like ourselves, we can understand them, have direct communication with them, and get from them an idea of true love, of true knowledge, and of true action. Their very presence uplifts us and gives us joy. We feel no want in their presence. We find in them the infinite love attributed to God. They are each, in his measure, the embodiment of God, and thus demonstrate to us the existence of God. Their words

arouse in us love for God, and their gracious acts strengthen us and make us masters of Anavic influences. They are also the best objects of our worship. Of God we know very little. He is beyond our comprehension. He is to us merely a name and is pictured as something just above our parents. These saints are not merely objects of our senses and of the mind and like ourselves mortals, but are also men of endless spiritual power. If the figure of an ordinary human being can absorb our whole attention when we talk to him, how much more can these divine beings influence our minds? They make an indelible impression on us and drive out of our minds petty objects of the world that catch our fancy. When our minds have grasped profound truths and our hearts have tasted endless love, we desire nothing except their gentle presence. If we worship them, it will be the best form of worshipping God.

Their teachings are sometimes written out and passed on to posterity in the form of books. But these books, though invaluable in themselves, cannot take the place of their authors. There is a great difference between studying the geography of a place with the help of a book and studying it from a person who has seen the place and gained first-hand knowledge of it. These liberated souls embody truths not only in their teachings but also in the songs sung by them in praise of God. When their mission is over they give up the body altogether and attain perfect freedom.

But it must be remembered that this state of freedom and bliss is not experienced, as is sometimes supposed,

in some particular world made for that purpose by God. As souls do not occupy space and as liberated souls have no bodies, they do not require a world to live in. They may be said to be omnipresent in the same sense as God is said to be.

## CHAPTER XI

# THE PATH AND EXERCISES

*The first section of the path—the second section—the third section—exercises for the three sections*

### *The First Section of the Path*

The path to the ultimate goal has three distinct sections. In the first section, the soul's ignorance is so intense that it is concerned only with the conservation of its own interests in utter disregard of those of others. It takes special care of its own comforts and of the safety and well-being of the property, relations, and friends that it regards as its own. To attain this end, it is prepared to injure others as much as is necessary and possible. It has one law for itself and a different law for others. Nature's wealth, which it chanced to get possession of, is freely spent on injurious luxuries, while hundreds of its fellow souls which are as much entitled to Nature's gifts, stand at its door on the verge of starvation, covering their nakedness with rags. A man in this stage of life is not prepared to put up with any insult offered by another, but is ready to wound others' feelings. He is not prepared to make any sacrifice for the benefit of others, but is anxious to utilize others for his purposes. Such preferential treatment of the self is the characteristic of the souls within the limits of this section. This is what is ordinarily called egotism. But even those who belong

to this section, on the whole, do more right than wrong. We know that the confirmed liar speaks far more truths than lies. The hardened criminal helps his wife and children and even others who do not cross his purposes. He is said to be a bad man, because he does relatively more harm to society than those in the other sections. This section is a very long one and can be divided into several subsections, each of which may be called a religion in the conventional sense. There are conventional religions such as demonolatry and Lokayata (sensualism), corresponding to many of the subsections. We have seen that the journey to the goal takes countless births. Therefore a soul takes a large number of births to pass through a single subsection.

### *The Second Section*

Man learns by experience that self-aggrandisement and indifference to others' well-being are not unmixed advantages, but bring on positive suffering and misery, which sometimes far outweigh the immediate benefits that come from them. Man, as a social animal, has endless dealings with others. Of these, some are just and others unjust. These often lead in the end to pleasure and pain respectively. The frequent experience of such diametrically opposed feelings as pleasure and pain coming from justice and injustice compels him to know and to realize that what he does recoils on himself, that he reaps what he sows. He sees that he ought to be just in his dealings with others. He

cannot hurt others without hurting himself. He is forced to regard himself not as a separate entity free to do and have what he pleases, but as a member of society, a limb, or an organ of the body called humanity. Just as each part of the human body works for the well-being of the whole even at great sacrifice to itself, so he, as a member of the society, feels that he has to work for the welfare of the whole corporation and that by that means alone can he himself attain well-being. Besides, he feels pain when others treat him as unjustly as he has been treating some others. His experience shows that he cannot afford to be indifferent to the consequences of his deeds on others, and creates in him a desire to be fair towards them. This desire raised by the consideration of his own interests is strengthened by other circumstances. Society has made certain rules for the observance of its members and endeavours to enforce them. Secondly, the example of the better class of the members of the society has an unconscious influence on him. Thirdly, in helping others he finds joy, to which is often added a reflection of the joy in the person whom he helps. This forms a strong inducement to help others, and leads even to great self-sacrifice. Thus, to his love of himself and his belongings is added the love of other souls. The keynote of this section is altruism. This section also may be divided into a large number of subsections. Most of the better class of conventional religions are akin to some of these subsections. Śaiva philosophy divides this section into several parts, and has given each a name such as Buddhism, Jainism,

Vaishnavaism, and Mayavadam, which, however, is not identical with, but only corresponds to, the conventional religion that bears the name. These religions are defined by the limit of vision of the soul.* Adherents of the above-mentioned religions know no further than Buddhi, Guna, Prakriti, and Purusha respectively (the 14th, 13th, 12th, and 11th products).

## *The Third Section*

Self-sacrifice implies not only a considerable weakening of Anava, but also the accession of a large amount of true knowledge. This great influx of true knowledge creates dissatisfaction with mere devotion to the serving of other souls, because it brings on the realization that other souls are not the ultimate realities to which one should like to be attached. The feeling of union with other souls gives way to the desire for union with God. Love of God is now greater than love of other souls. The man in this section journeys towards God and gets closer and closer to him. Finally he reaches Him, gets absorbed in Him, and becomes one with Him. While in this section, his love for other souls starts from a different source. In the second section he loved other souls as brother souls and loved them as much as or even more than himself.

* The Buddhist, for example, admits all the tatvas as far as Buddhi. He does not admit the existence of anything higher than that. The Jain goes further and considers Guna as the highest physical existence, and God to be just above Guna.

Now he loves them as abodes of God, as images of God. He has little thought even of himself; the "I," "My," and "Mine" slowly disappear. He is becoming Godly, and all instincts and passions are being metamorphosed into love. His emotions having all become love, love asserts itself at all times. He now loves others not because others are souls like himself, but because love flows of itself and he cannot but love. He has now found out the truth that his body and mind are mere tools and not part of his real self, and he is not moved by circumstances that affect body or mind as pain or pleasure. He goes along this path, and reaches the ultimate goal of God-head. This section is the conventional religion called Śaivaism, which begins where love of souls develops into the love of God.

### *Exercises for the Three Sections*

The ordinary activities of a man constitute a form of exercise for self-realization which is helpful in all three sections alike. Every act of thought, speech, and deed is an exercise that can cause the upliftment of the soul. We have seen that right acts create the tendency to do right and wrong acts to avoid wrong-doing. There is hardly any time except during deep sleep, when we are altogether inactive. We are therefore constantly doing some exercise or other which takes us nearer the goal.

The second set of exercises includes imitation,

acquisition of knowledge, respecting public opinion, and submission to the laws of society and the State. The instinct of imitation is powerful in man and often acts unconsciously. Imitation implies change in our activities and is therefore a factor in the process of evolution. The acquisition of knowledge often makes great changes in our lives. Wrong knowledge is the indirect cause of many evils. Hatred, intolerance, and cruelty arise mainly out of wrong knowledge. But it cannot certainly be affirmed that knowledge alone can save us from evil ways. Knowledge is necessary, though not always sufficient. Where the acceptance of the new truth does not collide with habits that cannot easily be given up, knowledge does influence action. Even otherwise, it tends to break up and enfeeble habits. The opinion of friends and neighbours, the laws of society and of the State have also a tendency to deter a person from wrongdoing and to make him mend his ways, although they are often violated as a result of the play of other forces.

The third set of exercises are the ritualistic exercises, which serve the double purpose of increasing love for God and adherence to the righteous life. Every conventional religion has a set of exercises for its followers. The wearing of a cross by a Roman Catholic is a special exercise intended to remind him of the great solicitude Jesus had for the salvation of the world. This induces him to accept, and to co-operate with, Jesus for his personal salvation. The sacred ashes of the Śaivite remind him of the love of God, which reduces to ashes impure tendencies in man, makes

him feel that God's love is with him, and creates in him a desire to lead a life which is in keeping with the possession of God's love. This contemplation and the worship of God is the most important of the ritualistic exercises.

Members of the first section have to depend mainly on exercises of the first kind. They may avail themselves of a little of the second and the third kinds. But members of the second section, who are anxious to do what is right, make very large use of exercises of the second kind and utilize the third kind of exercises in varying proportions, according to the nature of the conventional religion they follow. They require aids to right action, a suitable plan of life, and special ritualistic exercises, which will be dealt with in the next three chapters and are mainly taken from the teachings of Śaivaism.* Members of the third section have no difficulty in doing what is right and require only special ritualistic exercises. These will be the subject of the last chapter, and are taken exclusively from Śaivaism.

* But other conventional religions also may supply them.

## CHAPTER XII

# AIDS TO RIGHT ACTION

*The basis of right action—studies helpful to right action—formation of right tastes and habits—extension of principles—conquest of long-standing habits—control of emotions—the company of the good and contemplation of God—science and philosophy—self-sacrifice*

### *The Basis of Right Action*

Right action has for its basis either the doctrine of universal brotherhood or the doctrine of the unity of society. There are some who limit brotherhood and society to human beings, while others extend them to animals also. Universal brotherhood is derived by theists from the fatherhood of God and by agnostics from the motherhood of Nature. Believers in God hold that all living beings owe their bodily existence to Him and personify Him as the Father, while agnostics believe that they are products of Nature which they personify as the Mother. Brotherhood implies love, regard, and respect for each other's rights, which are essential to right action. As already pointed out in the last chapter, those who regard society as a unit or a body are bound to serve one another and work for the good of society, even at great self-sacrifice, as do the various organs and limbs of the human body. This is a better but a more difficult conception than brotherhood, and forms the basis of Vedic Dharma.

Right action has two sections, the negative portion

which begins with non-violence and the positive portion which ends in self-sacrifice.

### *Studies Helpful to Right Action*

The doctrine of brotherhood compels the recognition of the principle that every living being has a right to the safety of its person and property. Once this principle is admitted, the injustice of violating the rights of another must be accepted. But difficulty arises in the application of the principle, largely as a result of clash of interests. A man may tell himself, "I have a right to the safety of my body. For this I must eat; but having no food I can rob my neighbour." He forgets that he has a robust body which can help him to earn his bread. To avoid such blunders it is useful to study some moral code* whether from books or from the instructions of parents, teachers, and other elders. The laws in these codes may be extended by analogy. But the study of these rules is only the first step, as cases often arise of a complicated nature to which neither the rules nor their extensions can be readily applied. To meet such cases, a training in sound

* The present century sees the breakdown of all time-honoured ethical codes and the replacement of those by the application of first principles. The questions are asked, Why should a boy honour his father? Why should a man not commit adultery? and so on. A cultured man may ask these questions and arrive at safe answers. But, if others also should attempt to answer these themselves, they are likely to blunder. This movement unhinges conduct and causes confusion in society.

reasoning is essential. Many a man has regretted an act of his on realizing the mistake in reasoning that he committed. "Evil is wrought as much through want of head as through want of heart." The study of logic, both deductive and inductive, is necessary but not sufficient. It ought to be studied with the express purpose of being used in practical life and must be followed by such use. Deep scholarship need not be aimed at. The mastery of the elementary principles will do.

Logic and ethics can only supply canons and standards but cannot discriminate between the objects that have to be measured and judged. We often misjudge the workings of other minds, and logic or ethics applied to such wrong judgments can lead only to wrong acts. Man judges others by his own standard, and often goes wrong, as the minds of people do not always work in the same manner in the same set of circumstances. Acts of injustice are often committed through misapprehension of their effects. The teacher who canes a boy with the intention of improving him may harden him and make him worse. Such errors may be avoided by the study of the sister science of psychology. But just as good students of logic often reason wrongly, so scholars of psychology blunder in their dealings with others. The study of these subjects ought to be pursued with the express purpose of using them in daily life. Not only for avoiding such errors, but also for gaining success in life, knowledge of the mental working of man has been found to be of inestimable value.

## *Formation of Right Tastes and Habits*

A fairly accurate knowledge of right and wrong having been acquired by these means, action ordinarily follows the path of righteousness, as the man in the second section is anxious to do right. But if his tastes and habits have not been rightly formed, these stand in the way of doing what he knows to be right. These forces ought to be overcome. The wrong taste must be traced to the folly on which it is based, and an attempt must be made either to remove it or replace it by right ones. The excessive use of liquor deranges the brain and leads to wrong deeds. The taste for liquor is thus an unwise one, and must be replaced by a distaste for it. The taste for luxurious life leads to pecuniary ruin, which in turn compels one to unfair means of making money. Habits due to an inflated ego such as revengefulness, easily taking offence and harsh treatment of inferiors, require close introspection and re-examination of the points of view. Habits of loose thinking in which sufficient regard is not paid either to principles or to their application also lead to wrong acts. These can be avoided by adopting a well-regulated life based on definite principles. One must find pleasure in undergoing inconveniences and hardships for the sake of rigid adherence to principles. Life is not worth living without principles and without experiencing privations and sufferings for the sake of principles. In the initial stage, there is often a great struggle as there is in learning anything of real value. We had many a fall followed by tears when, as infants, we

learned to walk. We now see the value of the art of walking and find that we got it cheap for these falls. So also, the sufferings that follow the adoption of a principled life are as nothing compared to the great value of such a life and the intense pleasure that comes of that life.

### *Extension of Principles*

There are some who have profound respect for certain principles and religiously follow them but break other equally important principles. Some men have a great regard for honesty and condemn those who lack that virtue. But they are cruel, hard-hearted, and loose in many other ways. This is due to a one-sided training which can, however, be improved. They realize that principles ought to be respected and strictly followed at any cost. That is why they lay so much stress on honesty. They will, therefore, endeavour to follow other principles also if they give due thought to them and direct some energy of will in order to follow them. As already stated, the adoption of a new principle entails a great strain at the beginning, and when this stage has passed, loyalty to principle causes great joy. When it has become crystallized, the conquest of another principle may be attempted. Thus a person who respects one principle can gradually extend his loyalty to other principles and become a thoroughly righteous man.*

* The gradual conquest of wrong habits is not an invariable method. A person sometimes loves righteousness and gives up a number of wrong habits simultaneously.

### *Conquest of Long-standing Habits*

But habits of wrong action sometimes become so hardened that it is almost impossible to get rid of them. They have almost become reflex actions, and the mere presence of the stimulus is enough to start the action. No pious resolution to avoid it, not the most determined effort of will can always withstand the tendency to do it. To overcome this habit, the reflex mechanism must be rusted by disuse. The circumstances that cause the stimulus must be avoided for a long period of time and some innocent pleasure must replace the one caused by it. The drinker must altogether avoid the company of drinkers and places where drink is available. When the thirst for drink comes and endeavours to occupy the mind, it must be diverted immediately by plunging into some other occupation. One may go to a teetotaller friend and discuss with him questions of great moment or take to some favourite sport or game. The habit may also be amenable to medical treatment.

### *Control of Emotions*

Violent emotions often cause wrong actions. Emotions were meant by Nature for self-protection. Animals have neither law courts nor means of oral defence, and must either flee from an enemy or use all energy at their command to disable it or kill it. The emotions that make these possible are respectively fear and anger. When these emotions arise, reserve sugar in

the liver is liberated for the creation of additional energy, and the animal exhibits extraordinary energy. This is necessary for the safety of wild animals. But we have passed that stage and we have several other means of safely dealing with our enemy. These emotions are therefore not necessary for our ordinary purposes and should not be allowed to assert themselves. Besides leading us to other dangers, they waste our reserve energy which took us several months to store up.

Similarly, sorrow is an incentive to additional exertion to make good the loss that has been sustained. If a man's house has been burnt, he feels sorry, works harder to earn more, and builds a new house. But our sorrow, not unlike fear and anger, often defeats its original purpose by disorganizing the body and reducing even the usual output of energy. Sorrow for the loss of relations or friends is mere folly, as they cannot be made good. Sorrow sometimes leads to despair. When a man is desperate, he sets little value on his own life and consequently on those of others. Such men sometimes murder others and themselves.

Instances are not wanting of men who admit that their acts are unreasonable but justify them on the ground that their feelings were irresistible. Emotional life is injurious to the individual and to society, and emotions should not be allowed to get the better of discretion. The control of emotions is an education by itself, and can be acquired by careful and diligent practice. The realization of the evils they cause can do much to keep them under subjection. The man who

has not learnt to check his emotions by deliberation has no means of saving himself when an emotion arises with unusual force.

### *The Company of the Good and Contemplation of God*

A great aid to right action is the company of the righteous. The imitative instinct is powerful in man and influences his thoughts, words, and deeds. People sometimes give up their own handwriting and imitate the writing of those whom they admire. The unique advantage of imitation is the saving of strain that is ordinarily needed for change of habits. It works almost unconsciously and replaces the old habit stealthily and without any kind of struggle. The man who wishes to be in the right must seek the company of the righteous, who will readily take him if he makes known his purpose. If their company is not available, their writings and their lives can take their place. A man is what his thoughts are. If his thoughts are fed with the words of righteous men and with the accounts of their deeds, he slowly and steadily becomes one of them, if opposing forces are reduced to a minimum.

Similar to the company or the thoughts of the righteous is the thought of God. Our conception of God is that of a perfect Being, and the contemplation of a perfect Being is a great aid to the righteous life. Divine contemplation overcomes wrongdoing in three ways. It brings home to us God's greatness and

consequently our insignificance. This deals a fatal blow to I-ness which is the most prolific cause of wrongdoing. Secondly, it reminds us of the fact that all living beings are essentially divine and requires us to be considerate and kind to them. Thirdly, it shows that things of this world are of no real value and crushes the desire to possess and enjoy certain things for which we have no justification. Besides being an infallible cure for wrongdoing of every kind, it is a powerful stimulus to acts of positive righteousness. The disadvantage of divine contemplation is that it is one-sided. What gives zest to company is conversation, which is impossible in communion with God. But the disadvantage is felt only at the commencement. As the attachment to God increases, contemplation of God becomes sweeter than the company of friends and finally than anything else in this world.

Almost as valuable as the contemplation of God is the contemplation of saints, who are human as well as divine, and easily bridge the gulf between man and God. But they do not appear in this world at all times and in all places. We have their lives, however, and the songs they have composed, which often melt our hearts and make them readily respond to whatever is righteous and detest everything that is wrong.

### *Science and Philosophy*

The last, but not the least, aids to right action are science and philosophy. Man often does wrong in his pursuit of sense-pleasures. But science says that

sense-pleasure is a deception invented by nature for the preservation of the body.

Castor oil is unpalatable because it is not a food; toddy gives an unpleasant smell because it is not wholesome; treading on thorns gives pain because it injures the tissues. Feelings of pain and pleasure arose in the course of evolution,* to point out where the safety of the body lies. They had no intrinsic value. Those things that cause pleasant sensations are ordinarily good for the body. Sensations are thus only indices of the values of things. But we set a real value on them, hanker after pleasant sensations, and get beyond proper limits. Philosophy says that this is folly. A great many of our wrong acts are the results of seeking pleasure for its own sake, and if we listen to philosophy we can make up our minds to minimize them.

Philosophy goes further and says that the body and other possessions of the soul are intended for the suppression of Anava and must be used for that purpose. Anava leads to the pursuit of those sense-pleasures which are injurious to us and to others. It also intensifies the sense of I-ness and My-ness. Therefore when we propose to perform an act, it is our duty to see whether it subserves Anava in any form or on the other hand suppresses it by following truth and justice and by sacrificing the self's worldly interests for the benefit of other souls. The question must be

* If an animal had felt pleasure while experiencing something injurious to its well-being, that species would have perished.

asked, "Does this act tend to glorify Anava or to suppress it?"

Philosophy also says that the soul of souls is God and that the soul is, therefore, essentially divine. It must avoid wrong acts not only because they are unworthy of its divinity but also because its goal of self-realization can be reached only by basing its acts on the truth of its essentially divine nature.*

## *Self-sacrifice*

We have hitherto been considering only the negative side of right action, the avoidance of wrong. But the fostering of the positive side is of greater importance, as it is also a means of avoiding wrongdoing. This hinges on self-sacrifice. Just as the emphasis of the self is the basis of wrongdoing, so the effacement of the self is the foundation of righteousness. The self here stands really for the body and other products of Maya, with which the soul usually identifies itself through Anavic influence. When a man gives his food to another and starves himself, it is the satisfaction gained through the body that he sacrifices. If he helps a person suffering from a dangerous infectious disease, he is prepared to sacrifice his life. If he spends for the benefit of others the time and energy which he can devote to his personal advancement, he sacrifices

* The soul is compared to a prince brought up by a savage and fancying himself also to be a savage. When God, his Father, comes up to him and convinces him of his ancestry, he gives up his foster-father, goes up to Him, and enjoys endless bliss.

those advantages. The man who is prepared to sacrifice his possessions for others is not likely to wrong others. Thus the positive side of right action is doubly beneficial to the soul.

The question arises, Why should a person sacrifice his possessions for the benefit of others? The first reason is that mere possession is of no value to the soul. None of the products of Maya that the soul possesses belong to it for ever. They come and go. Their value to it depends on the use to which they can be put. If they serve I-ness or My-ness they are injurious to it, and if they serve selflessness they are beneficial. Hence the justification for deeds of self-sacrifice. The man in the second section knows that other living beings are also souls like himself, that they experience sufferings like himself and would like to be free from them. He therefore helps them when they are in distress. We have seen that of all the emotions of man, love alone is divine and must be fostered. It leads to self-sacrifice and is measured by it. It makes a person identify himself with another and leads him to share his woes and sufferings. Love and its fruit of self-sacrifice multiply each other, in the same way as a tree brings forth fruits and fruits bring forth trees. In the course of the rapid growth of love, self-sacrifice becomes as pleasant as self-serving is to the man in the first section. He merges himself in the selves of others.

In the initial stage of self-sacrifice, love for others is not sufficiently intense to induce one to make appreciably great sacrifices. The intellect must compel the

man to help others. The gratitude that is often returned causes pleasure, which leads to further acts of sacrifice. Besides, the act itself reacts on the emotion and awakens love. If this is persistently followed, love issues forth accompanied by sympathy and tenderness. Once it has begun to assert itself, it grows steadily if it is not checked, and very rapidly if it is assisted by the intellect.

# CHAPTER XIII

# THE LIFE OF RIGHT ACTION

*The need for a definite programme of life—the infant life—the student life—the householder's life—the forest-dweller's life—the philanthropist's life.*

## *The Need for a Definite Programme of Life*

Our knowledge is so limited and imperfect and occasions for wrongdoing so numerous that some external force or system is necessary to compel us to lead a good life. The tendency of the mind is to move along the line of least resistance, which not infrequently leads to wrongdoing. At times the mind from one point of view prefers one course of action, and from another the opposite course. It has also to decide between the two, accept one and reject the other. It is thus plaintiff, defendant, and judge, and occupies an exceedingly difficult position. It must therefore be placed in a definite groove so that it may conform to right standards of life. There ought to be different stages in this groove so that it may be possible for every person to make the fullest use of his stay in this world. Each stage must be progressive, enforcing a discipline and a set of duties which fit a man for those of the next.

It is proposed to consider here the Vedic life, which consists of the following five stages: the infant, the

student, the householder, the forest-dweller, and the philanthropist. In the householder's life, one's love extends to relations, friends, and acquaintances. In the next stage, the love goes up to all those who live in a village, province, or country. This is disinterested love confined to an area. In the last, the love extends to humanity as a whole, in full recognition of the principle of universal brotherhood. If a man places himself in these three stages, his love for others is bound to expand. As a rule, it is good to reach these stages in succession so that the duties pertaining to each may be faithfully performed. We see how householder politicians often fail in their domestic duties as well as in their duties to the country. But there is nothing to prevent a householder from doing social and political work if he can attend to both satisfactorily and if he has genuine love for the country. It is also permissible for one to pass from student life directly to philanthropic work, if one is qualified to do so.

## *The Infant Life*

In the earliest years a child lives under the guiding authority of its parents. Wise parents treat their children with strictness, kindness, and consideration. Nothing else in this world requires so much earnest thought as the dealings of parents with their children. It is easy to spoil them by indulgence or cruelty. The character of a child begins to be formed at about the first year. A Tamil proverb says, "The habit formed in the cradle remains to the end of life." The

study of child psychology is more important to parents than to teachers. Ignorance of this science has caused the ruin of countless lives.

## *The Student Life*

When the child has reached a certain stage, the parents hand over the child to the teacher and delegate to him the authority that they possess. This age varies according to the aptitudes and future careers of the children. An intelligent child destined to intellectual life begins its studies at the age of five. A child intended for State service begins studies later, to ensure a strong physique. Those who are less intelligent begin still later and have a shorter course. Children of these two classes had both cultural and vocational training. In early Hindu society, those who were found fit for original work spent thirty-six years on their studies, the second class eighteen years, and the others nine years. These periods can now be cut short by about a third.

The student life is erroneously held by some to be the preparation for the householder's life. The Śaiva religion considers the student life to be the most important part of life and the others only as appendices to it. The early part of life is surer than the others. The student has, therefore, to make the best use of his life, and devote it to attain the object of his birth. He is expected to lead a purely religious life and is hence called a Brahmachari, which means, "one who walks in the way of God."

Circumstances and opportunities must be created for a student which are conducive to the awakening of good desires and to the atrophy of evil ones. The most important circumstance is the personality of the teacher. His intelligence must be above the average so that acute intellects may also profit by his teaching. He must also possess vast learning and culture besides patience and sympathy. Residential schools must be provided under the control of men of high character and breadth of vision, association with whom is indispensable to the awakening of the nobler impulses in children. In ancient Hindu society, great teachers were men who had passed the householder's stage and who dedicated their lives to service of this kind. They regarded students as their new or adopted children, and the latter were treated as members of the teacher's family.* The teacher, being an elderly man, had his passions well under control, was of a serene, calm, and cheerful disposition, and had gained first-hand knowledge of the world by experience. His affection and tenderness, his saintly life, and his vast knowledge of men and things charmed the pupils, who found delight in pleasing him, imitating him, and acquiring knowledge from him. He generally lived outside towns and villages in the solitude of a forest-clearing, in an atmosphere congenial to study and meditation. The teacher led a simple but hardy life; so did the pupils.

The first lessons given to a child were on purity

* Hence the term Gurukulavasam (literally living as members of the teacher's family).

of body* and of mind. A sound body is a valuable aid to intellectual work and moral control. The next lesson was on morning and evening worship, which gave concentration of mind, development of the will, and Love of God. Thirdly, came intellectual education. The teacher allowed the pupil to proceed with his studies in his own way and at his own pace, and only gave assistance when it was needed. The pupils grew accustomed to deep and sustained thinking, and the intellect became strong enough to gain mastery over emotions and impulses. The amount of discipline gained during the period was enormous. The animal instincts were sublimated by the good influence of the teacher. Self-conceit was transformed into self-respect. Indignation for personal affront issued through the channel of what is called righteous indignation. The love for pleasures of the world was transmuted into love for the welfare of other living beings. The veneration for the teacher (Guru) extended to veneration for God, the great Teacher (Parama Guru).

### *The Householder's Life*

With such invaluable equipment, the young man entered the life of a householder, which was the touchstone of his student life; for, this stage of life has always been one of great trial. Bringing up children in the right way has always been one of the severest of tasks.

* The use of certain foods such as flesh, fish, and alcoholic drinks, was prohibited as exciting causes of unwholesome passions.

It requires endless patience, self-effacement, deep thought, and trust in God. A child is hence called "putra," which means, "he who saves one from hell." Children are ruined by the failure of parents to perform their duty in the proper manner. One unkind word, look, or deed has sometimes been the cause of changing the attitude of the child and of ruining one who would have become a gem but for the father's blunder. A man has no right to marry who has not studied the method of bringing up children, or who does not possess the necessary patience and earnestness to look after these tender beings and their infinite potentialities for good.*

Besides this sacrifice to his children, the householder had five others to make. The first was the Deva Yagna, which was his sacrifice to God. He offered his love to God and rendered service in and to places of worship. Every act of his must satisfy the condition that it was a means of honouring God. The second was the Rishi Yagna, which was a sacrifice to the Rishis, who were the givers of knowledge. The householder's sacrifice in this connection was his work towards adding to the existing stock of knowledge by original contribution or by the dissemination of existing knowledge by teaching or by helping teachers and authors. Next came the Pitr Yagna, which was sacrifice to one's parents. Parents are gods on earth. Personal service

* No man begins agriculture without studying the art of agriculture. But few learn the art of bringing up children before they marry. It is thought that a human child is a thing of much less importance than a tobacco seedling.

should be rendered to them with affection and devotion. When they were dead they were remembered with love and veneration. To the class of Pitrs belonged also uncles, aunts, brothers, and sisters who were in need of protection or support. The fourth is the Athithi Yagna. This is helping strangers who are in need of help, such as the sick, the poor, and the deformed. The last is the Bhuta Yagna, which consists in helping the subhuman species, such as the cattle, the horse, the crow, and the dog.

The householder has also social obligations and has to obey social laws. These sometimes put him to very trying discipline. A healthy public opinion is an important determining factor of his acts. He is bound by the laws of the land and by his duties to the country. All these tend to put him in the right path and to make his life good and useful.

### *The Forest-Dweller's Life*

The next stage was that of the forest-dweller.* When the son was able to take charge of the household,† the man transferred to his son the burden of household management and devoted his time to spiritual contemplation and to the service of others.‡ Some rendered

* He is called Vanaprastha. He lives in the forest close to the village, having reduced his needs to the barest minimum.

† "When he observes wrinkles and white hairs upon his person, and beholds the face of the child of his child, then let him retire to the forest" (Manu VI. 2).

‡ "Let him befriend all creatures and think tenderly of all beings. Let him give ever and take never" (Manu VI. 8).

social service to their neighbours, and others to the village or the city. More capable men had wider fields of activity and served a whole district or a country. Some became great teachers and rendered invaluable service to the rising generation. They led a simple life, and served others for the sake of service with no thought of any reward. This was the first step in selfless work. For, the tinge of My-ness that appeared in serving one's own country was unintentional, and hence unreal. Service was done in one's country, but not because it was one's own. On the other hand, service to one's country on the ground of patriotism is rank selfishness, and has no place in this stage. A large part of the time of those in this stage was spent in religious exercises which had an elevating effect and formed the lever for selfless acts.

### *The Philanthropist's Life*

The fifth stage was that of the philanthropist. His characteristic was intense love for God and for humanity. He abandoned his home and found no difference between his son and an utter stranger in a remote corner of the world. He did not know where he would get his next meal or where he would rest for the night. He had no thought of his own village or country, and loved the world as he once loved his own country. He went from house to house, from village to village, from country to country with his first-hand knowledge of spiritual truths, imparting joy and happiness to those who met him and rendering them

assistance of every kind, including that of healing the sick, cheering the depressed, and reclaiming the lost and the erring. The rules of this stage of life did not allow him to stay in a place for more than three days, as a longer stay might create in him an attachment to the spot. He would not be hurt by insults or provoked by any unpleasant acts of others. He regarded everyone as his *alter ego*. As his business was to serve others and not himself, he had no thought of himself and viewed respect and disregard, praise and abuse, benefit and injury with the same serene indifference.

These five stages in a man's life give five different kinds of discipline to a person. The parents in the first stage, teachers in the second, and the duties prescribed for the other stages form the external authorities for the enforcement of right living.

# CHAPTER XIV

# EXERCISES OF THE SECOND SECTION

*The value of the thought of God—forms for the contemplation of God—method of contemplation—time of contemplation—minor exercises*

## *The Value of the Thought of God*

The essence of all religious exercises is the thought of God. It is of value to us in three ways. It presents to us the highest conceivable ideal. The knowledge of ideals leads to the desire to realize them and then to the effort to attain them. Biographies of good men are useful to us chiefly on this account. Secondly, the contemplation of lofty ideals is a source of serene joy and chastening of the mind.* Thirdly, God is the only reality with which we are concerned and which must be the ultimate object of all our endeavours and activities.

## *Forms for the Contemplation of God*

The contemplation of anything must be centred on something the mind can grasp. Most people have mental pictures of the objects they think about. Some do not form mental pictures but use qualities† of those

* Even atheists cannot deny these two values of the thought of such an ideal of goodness.

† The word quality is used here to denote essential characteristics, and attributes to denote non-essential ones like relationship.

objects to raise the thought, which is thus image-less. But, when the object of thought has neither a form nor definite qualities, the name itself forms the peg of thought. In the formation of any valid conception of God, the first method is of no assistance, because God has no form. Nor is the second method any better; for His qualities are beyond our comprehension. We can think of Him only with the help of the name. But this thinking does not serve the purpose of contemplation. It serves only as an index of what we mean. Contemplation requires something more substantial than a name and more intimately connected with the object. We have therefore to resort to some incorrect forms of contemplation. We must create some picture of God, possessing or depicting attributes that describe Him. Any picture of God that we create can only be anthropomorphic. But we can supplement it by assigning attributes of God to the various parts of the picture. In addition to the mental picture, we can also create material forms to serve in place of mental pictures. Mental pictures are a strain on the mind and are not likely to be steady. Material forms appeal to the eye as well as to the mind, and have therefore a distinct advantage over mental images. Most conventional religions use material images. It is unfortunate that those who use mental images fancy that their images are the real forms of God and despise those who use material forms. Everyone who has not become God is incapable of knowing Him, and must therefore use some image or other; and it is unfair for the worshipper of one kind of image to look down upon a worshipper

of another kind of image. Image of some form or other is indispensable to us.

Images ought to be of different kinds to suit different purposes and different classes of people. First of all, there must be an image which symbolizes all the aspects of God's Love that we are familiar with, so that they may all be present before us. There must also be images, each of which symbolizes only a particular aspect, so that the mind may dwell on it and form a deep impression of it with its assistance. These two kinds of images are like a map of the whole world and maps of different continents. Advanced worshippers do not require an analysis of the attributes of God. They are satisfied with a single all-inclusive attribute which can be represented by an amorphous image.*

### *Method of Contemplation*

With the help of these images the worshipper fixes his mind on God. The first requisite of contemplation is the attitude of devotion or love for God. We love those things that are desirable to us. The drunkard loves toddy, the miser his money, the child its mother, the scientist the discovery of truth, and the saint the Reality. If the worshipper is a saintly man, his mind goes of itself to God. His love goes exclusively to Him. He finds no difficulty in spiritual contemplation. But the ordinary man must take pains to withdraw

* An account of images used by Śaivites is given in Appendix A.

his love from worldly objects and to direct it to God. His thoughts have been saturated with things of the world. It is during the time of his worship that his thoughts go seriously to God. He must make his mind dwell on the value of God's Love. Like the mother, it has given him this body, and more than his mother it gives all the other countless bodies that the soul gets by turns. God's Love is our eternal mother. We therefore feel bound to direct our love to God. We thank our earthly physician who cures us of a dangerous illness. Infinitely more should we love the Great Physician who cures us of the eternal disease of the soul. Thoughts of this kind should precede or form the preliminary to contemplation of God. In contemplation proper, the images themselves are such as can tell us what we should think.*

### *Time of Contemplation*

The times of worship must be either those which are favourable to it or those that particularly need it. (1) The time that satisfies both conditions is early morning. The mind is then fresh and vigorous after sleep, and has had no preoccupations which usually distract worship. It is therefore a favourable time. It is a psychological fact that the first object in the morning that powerfully impressed itself on it is likely to persist in it for a long time during the day. This persistence is highly desirable, and worship is therefore particularly

* The suggestive nature of an image is given as a sample in Appendix A.

valuable at that time. Meditation, adoration, and the wearing of sacred ashes with kneeling or prostration give exercise to the mind, the tongue, and the body. The thought can continue up to the time of the morning bath. (2) The time immediately after bath is also favourable to worship. The brain and the body are refreshed by the bath and will be helpful to worship. (3) The time after meals finds the brain dull on account of the heavy work of the digestive organs and the mind is correspondingly dull. Self-control is at a low ebb at that time. Worship strengthens the will and helps self-control. (4) When going out on business, a person must be fortified by worship to avoid temptation to use unfair means in his dealings with others. (5) In the evening, when the day's work is over, the mind is fairly free from pressing thoughts and can well be engaged in thoughts of God. (6) On going to bed, the mind ought to be free from thoughts of the world and should engage in meditation, as worries disturb sleep and impair mental health. Besides, it gives a good turn to the subconscious work that takes place during sleep. On most of these occasions, the worship with sacred ashes is most appropriate as it is simple.

Daily worship has a tendency to become mechanical and to lose much of its value. Care must be taken to make it more and more earnest and real. If this is not possible, it can be improved by special periodical worship, which must be more comprehensive than the daily form. This may be done once a week, a fortnight, or a month. Any interval longer than a month will create too long a gap, as the effects of the special wor-

ship, however intense it may be, cannot last longer than a month. Periodical worship must have two important characteristics. One of them is the attempt to lead a purely religious life. On that particular day the man keeps himself quite sober and self-controlled, and walks in the path of righteousness. He creates all possible circumstances favourable to it, thinks mainly of God and of the danger of yielding to Anavic influence. He prepares his mind to meet calmly and boldly any unpleasant or undesirable event or mishap on that day. The second characteristic is the control of hunger, and sometimes even sleep. This is a training in self-control and experiencing hardships, which is invaluable to religious life. On such days, a large part of the time is devoted to spiritual contemplation, worship, acts of charities, reading lives of saints, and associating with men who lead a pure life. This practice shows the worshipper the possibility of leading a pure and good life, gives him a taste of it, trains him in it, and disposes him to behave likewise on other days. The effect persists for a period of time, the length of which depends upon the effects of the circumstances that follow the day.

## *Minor Exercises*

(1) Introspection: The worldly man cannot have at all times the thought of God or the sense of justice. He is likely to go amiss. But every blunder must be made a stepping-stone for right doing. This is possible only if the person examines himself periodically and

strikes a balance sheet. He must see how often, in difficult circumstances, he has been in the right, and how often he has missed the right path. He must analyse the two sets of circumstances and draw his attention to the circumstances that were respectively favourable to right and to wrong. He must devise means thereafter to create the circumstances that favoured the right deed and to overcome the circumstance that turned him aside from rectitude. People are sometimes taught to be sorrowful for a wrong done, and even to punish themselves. But sorrow causes mental and physical depression which would rather lead to wrongdoing than to abstinence from it. What is required is finding out the means of avoiding circumstances that lead to wrongdoing. This can be done in quite a manly way.

(2) Religious study: The determination to avoid the circumstance that caused wrongdoing is necessary but not sufficient. The repetition of the desire to avoid a particular act may possess the mind and weaken its power to avoid it. The mind cannot catch negatives. It abhors them more than Nature abhors vacuum. It must be given something positive to prevent it from wrongdoing. "Lives of great men all remind us, We can make our lives sublime." One must read the lives of great men. If the company of good men is available it is all the better. Seeing has much greater influence than reading. Besides, their kindness and love are highly infectious.

Devotional songs composed by one's self or by saintly men are useful to the growth of love for God and to

righteous behaviour. The thoughts in them appeal to the intellect, and the words and music appeal to the heart. Associations intended for the promotion of religious studies must supplement individual efforts. Talks on the lives of great men, exchange of thoughts on religious practice, and worship in the company of pious souls add a tremendous force to the individual's efforts towards a good life.

# CHAPTER XV

# EXERCISES OF THE THIRD SECTION

*The needs of the third section—the aid of the spiritual teacher—the exercises of the first stage (Charya)—the exercises of the second stage (Kriya)—the exercises of the third stage (Yoga)—the exercises of the fourth stage (Gnana)*

## *The Needs of the Third Section*

The aspirant to the third section has outgrown social life and thirsts for communion with God. Hitherto his primary occupation has been the serving of souls, and the worship of God has only been secondary. His life of self-sacrifice has killed his egoism and has considerably weakened Anava. He has acquired a certain amount of absolute knowledge and realizes that union with God is the ultimate goal. As, in an elephant made of wood, the ordinary man ignores the wood of which it is made and thinks only of the form of the elephant, so the man at the beginning of the first section regarded himself as a body rather than as a soul. In the second section he views all sentient beings as souls. It is in the third section that he sees that the essence of the soul is God. Hence in the third section, serving souls is only serving God. Wrong-doing in the ethical sense is impossible for a man in this section, and he requires no aids to right action. His main occupation will be the service of God, and it is for this that he requires aid.

## *The Aid of the Spiritual Teacher*

This aid he gets from a more advanced soul whom he seeks as his Guru and who gives him the necessary instructions and training to enable him to get through this arduous course. This equipment is called Deeksha and is given on three occasions: the first on entering this section, the second on reaching the second stage, and the third on reaching the fourth stage. Each Deeksha consists of six elements. The first element is the winning a man over by means of his gracious look.* We all know the part played by the eye in expressing feelings. We have experienced the relief that the mother's look gave us when we were in distress. Her gracious look instantaneously stopped our crying and gave us joy and peace of mind. The Guru is the spiritual mother. His look literally captivates the disciple and makes him almost one with him.

The second element is the spiritual touch.† The value of this we have had many occasions to realize. When convincing arguments fail to change a young man's course of action, a pat on his back has often succeeded in converting him. The spiritual touch makes a captive of the impulses and instincts in the body, which becomes the willing slave of the Guru and places itself at his disposal for the exclusive service of God.

The Guru next obtains control over the mind‡

* Called Nayana (lit. sight), intended to weaken Anava.

† Called sparsa (lit. touch), intended to weaken Maya.

‡ Called Manasa (lit. mind), intended to weaken Karmic effects in the mind.

which should also be placed in the new path. His own mind gets into contact with the disciple's, wipes out the impressions of worldly things, and takes it to its own way of thinking.

Fourthly, he teaches his pupil the eternal truths.* He tells him that God is the ultimate reality; that the things of this world, including the body, are Maya in its process of evolution, that the soul attaches itself to these things as a result of the limitation of knowledge caused by Anava; that duties must be performed in utter disregard of their fruits; that the ultimate goal is perfection and union with God. These truths are taught to the disciple in a manner which carries conviction and realization.

Then he is given spiritual formulas† which embody these eternal truths and which can guide and control him in his activities. The teacher has thus supplied the disciple with true knowledge and the means of making use of it. He now makes the soul realize God's Love.‡ The soul then gets a faint vision of God and is inspired with love for Him.

The ceremony of Deeksha is a very long process attended by the worship of God in the image of fire. It equips the disciple for the exercises in the first stage of this section. A course of exercises is prescribed to him for increasing purity of mind and attachment

* Called Vachaka (lit. words), intended to rectify knowledge.

† Called Mantra (lit. protecting), intended to rectify action.

‡ Yoga (lit. union), intended for union with God.

to God. The first stage of this section is called Charya which means walking (in the way of God).

### *The Exercises of the First Stage (Charya)*

The exercises of this section are so framed that the three organs of a man's activity, the body, the tongue, and the mind, work in unison, leaving no room for distractions from any quarter. They therefore contain three elements, a physical act, an utterance, and a mental activity, called Kriya, Mantra, and Bhavana* respectively. Breath-control is also practised as means of controlling and concentrating the mind.

Besides the special religious observances of this stage, every other act of his life is made religious. When he bathes, he considers the water in which he bathes to be the Love of God, and the bath itself as a symbol of union with God. Since he regards the body as the abode of God, he considers the food that he takes to be an offering to Him. When he meets others he regards them as God and raises his hands in token of worship. He regards every work that he does as service to God who is enthroned in his heart. In his leisure hours, his tongue repeats mystic letters with his mind directed to God. He also spends some time every day in temple worship and temple service.

His love for God in this stage is compared to that of a servant for a master, and this stage is hence called Dasa Marga (the path of a servant). When he has

* For a full account of these, see Appendix B.

completed this course, he will be fit for the second stage which is called the Putra Marga (the path of the son). It may take several births for a soul to get through a single stage.

### *The Exercises of the Second Stage (Kriya)*

The second stage is called Kriya Marga (the path of action), because it has the largest number of exercises. Life in this stage therefore requires a fresh and larger supply of spiritual energy, which, as before, must be supplied by the Guru in the course of a fresh Deeksha.

The most important exercise in this stage is the worship of God in the amorphous image, the Lingam.* It is pillar-like and represents the straight line, which is the graphic representation of pure consciousness (Nada). It is sometimes called the pillar of fire because it burns evil and gives the soul the light of true wisdom which serves to remove its ignorance. The soul in this stage has such deep attachment to God that it requires only a broad hint to give its heart to God. It does not therefore require the numerous symbols and reminders in the morphic image used by the member of the first stage.

Linga worship is a very long process lasting nearly two hours. The chief elements of this are purification

* The word Linga literally means a graph, being derived from likh, to write. But Śaiva philosophy splits it into layam and gam, meaning that which causes involution and evolution (of the universe).

of body and mind, mental worship and external worship. Purification is, in this stage, far more effective than that in the first stage. The soul unites itself with God, and the body becomes an embodiment of God's Love.

After purification, begins worship. This is essentially and primarily mental. External worship of an image is subsidiary and supplementary. It is intended to give scope to the eyes, the hands, the tongue, and the rest of the body to serve God and for gaining satisfaction thereby. "In mental worship," says St. Appar, "the body is the temple, the mind is the servant, truth is purification, the heart is the Lingam, love is the liquid with which the Lingam is bathed." St. Vallalar says, "Worship is not merely the offering of water and flower. It is the wiping out of evil desires, anger, and I-ness, replacing them in the heart by God, and feeling his presence there at all times."

External worship consists of sixteen elements, all of which saturate the mind with the thought and love of God. One of the last items is offering the fruits of worship to God. According to Śaivaism, every action has a corresponding reaction or effect, which must be experienced by the doer. But worship of God is not intended for any gain. It is the overflow of the love for God manifesting itself in action, just as the love for a child manifests itself in a kiss and a caress, without a definite purpose or object in view. The worshipper therefore renounces the fruits or results of worship and offers them to God Himself. The last item in worship is self-surrender, the surrender of the

soul to God, to be guided and controlled by Him. This life of intense religious exercise makes God the all-absorbing subject of thought. Wherever the worshipper may be, in whatever business he may be engaged, his heart goes to God. This takes him to the next stage called Yoga.

### *The Exercises of the Third Stage (Yoga)*

The term "Yoga" literally means coming together, and denotes the stage at which the soul attains communion with God. This stage is also called the Sakha Marga (the path of the friend) and marks the highest intimacy of the soul with God. It is a natural consequence of the exercises of the second stage, and comes of itself. Yoga consists of the following eight elements: Good qualities (yama), good acts (nyama), right posture, breath control, removal of mental distraction, concentration of the mind on God, spiritual contact (yoga), and spiritual experience.

Good qualities (yama) are ten in number: Non-injury, truthfulness, honesty, chastity, kindliness, purity of heart, forbearance, courage, devotion to the performance of daily duties, and bodily purity. Good acts (nyama) are also ten: Self-sacrifice, cheerful living, thinking of God, worship of God, repetition of Mantras, liberality, study of philosophy, dreading wrongdoing, wise dealings, and penance. Posture is of many kinds, and breath-control comes by itself in this stage. The practice of breath-control begins in the first stage and

is continued in the second stage. It is believed to lead to many mystic experiences. All the other elements also come as a result of the exercises of the previous stage. This stage is the last stage in which the soul regards God as different from itself, and is therefore the one depicting the highest love. This intense love leads to a feeling of identity with God which is the characteristic of the next and the last stage called Gnana.

### *The Exercises of the Fourth Stage (Gnana)*

Entry into this stage requires the third and the last Deeksha. This can be given only by a liberated soul. The Anava of a soul at this stage is almost exhausted. It is time for liberation. Therefore all the past acts in arrears have to be experienced rapidly before liberation. This is made possible by the Love of God during the Deeksha ceremony. When the Deeksha is over, the Guru presents the ultimate truths and takes him through four sub-stages. In the first of these, called Shravanam, his disciple learns truths taught by the Guru. The second step is called Mananam, in which he ponders over what he has heard. In the third, called Nithidyasanam, he realizes the truths, which he experiences in the fourth called Samadhi. He realizes the universe as a product of Maya and his own body as distinct from his real self. He understands the true nature of the soul and of the Love of God in which it is bathed. He sees the Love of God everywhere and forgets his own individuality. He has therefore no

action of his own. He gives himself up to the Love of God and is entirely worked by it. He sees that he has all this time failed to realize his complete dependence on the Love of God, just as the ordinary man fails to note the importance of the heart that keeps him alive, of the ground that supports him, and of the space in which he moves about. If he helps others, he does not feel that he helps but finds himself to be merely a tool of God's Love. Later, he merges in the Love of God which takes him to God, like the boat that takes the passenger to port. When this union with God has taken place, the body either perishes at once or persists for some years so that the soul may serve as a Guru.

The Peria Puranam speaks of sixty-three persons who have attained liberation. Some of these were kings, ministers, cultivators, potters, washermen, and so on. The Śaiva religion offers the final goal to all fit souls irrespective of the ordinary differences of sex, birth, or position, and assures divine bliss in due course to all souls.

APPENDIX A

# IMAGES

## *Images for Contemplation and External Worship*

(*a*) *Images symbolizing all aspects.*—One of the most comprehensive images is Natarája. It has four hands and two legs. The hand that bears the drum represents God's act of evolving the universe and giving us our bodies. Just as a drum produces vibrations in the air and causes sound, so God produces motion in Maya and causes the evolution of the universe. This is how the drum symbolizes creation. Another hand, with the palm turned towards the worshipper telling him not to be afraid of anything, represents the sustenance of the universe. A third, having fire, indicates the involution of the universe. As fire burns things and makes them disappear, so God makes the universe return to its original form of Maya. The two feet represent the double aspect of the goal. The foot that crushes the dwarf symbolizes the Love of God which counteracts the power of Anava and frees the soul from its hold. The uplifted foot stands for eternal bliss which is the second aspect of the goal, and the fourth hand points to it. The smile of love also has a double significance. It silences the gospel of hatred and suspicion preached by Anavic influences, and offers a cordial welcome to the worshipper. The eye

in the forehead is the light of pure knowledge which dispels ignorance. The two ordinary eyes represent the powers to desire good and to do good. The contemplation of this image includes contemplation of both God and soul.

(*b*) *Images representing single aspects.*—Of images representing single attributes of God, five are essential. God's first and foremost attribute is love. There should be a separate image to represent love and nothing but love. The highest form of love that is known to us is that of the mother. Therefore the love of God is represented as the mother. To signify God's Love, the image must possess something super-anthropomorphic. The Śaiva image of God's love is called Uma.* It represents a mother, but has four hands instead of two. Almost all images of Śaiva worship have at least four hands, two of which are the same in all. One of these two is the uplifted hand corresponding to the second hand of Natarája, which exhorts the worshipper not to be afraid of anything and offers to protect him. The other hand, like the fourth hand of Natarája, points to the feet which symbolize the ultimate goal of true knowledge and infinite bliss. In pointing to the feet, it tells him by implication that it is wrong for him to be absorbed in worldly wants and cares, and that he should more and more engage himself in the wants of the soul and lead a life of usefulness.

The second image that gives a partial representation

* These three letters are mystic symbols and represent respectively the love of God which sustains, involves, and evolves the universe.

of God pictures Him as the Lord of the Universe. The Śaiva doctrine calls such an image Vinayaka (lit. He who has no lord above himself). This image has something like the proboscis of the elephant, of which the straight portion represents the universe of knowledge and the bent portion the universe of motion.*

These two images remind the worshipper of God's infinite love and His Lordship of the universe. In spite of the knowledge of these two great attributes, man forgets God and gives the first place to himself, i.e. to his bodily self. If he has a business that concerns his bodily self at a time fixed for worship of God, he prefers to attend to his worldly business. Thoughts of his worldly affairs drive out thoughts of God. It is important to root out this tendency of giving first place to oneself and second place to God. An image that can show this idea then becomes necessary. A great Śaiva saint said: "Is there any one in this universe so insignificant as myself or so great as You?" The Śaiva image that instils this thought is called Bhairava.

Another tendency in man is to give second place to God and first place to "My-ness," i.e. to something

* Maya in the unevolved form has no specific properties and is therefore represented geometrically by a point, which has only position but no dimensions. The first evolute of Maya, which is the universe of knowledge, is represented by a straight line, as it is the first element of geometrical figures. The second evolute is the universe of motion and is represented by a curved line which is the second geometrical element.

important to him from a worldly point of view. A story is related of a person who was at worship when his official superior called at his house. The man broke his worship and rushed to see him. This is giving first place to his superior and second place to God. This is the second obstacle to religious life. An image is necessary to impress this thought. Śaivaism has prescribed such an image and has called it Veerabhadra.

Having overcome the assertion of I-ness and My-ness, man is able to devote himself to the uninterrupted and single-minded worship of God, and now wants to submit to God for His guidance and control. He stands pledged to implicit obedience and discipline as before a Guru. The fifth partial image that he requires is therefore that of a Guru. This image is named Subrahmanya. It is more comprehensive than even Natarája, because it represents the Guru as well as God. It has six faces, which represent respectively the Lordship of the universe and the five great acts of God, creation of bodies, sustenance, destruction, counteraction of worldliness, and the illumination of the soul. It has twelve hands symbolizing various attributes. One of these holds a javelin, which is the symbol of pure knowledge.

(*c*) *Amorphous image*.—The Śiva Linga is an amorphous image. It resembles a pillar and represents the spiritual flame that destroys all ignorance and enlightens the soul. Being synthetic in form, it is suited to the worship of more advanced souls.

(*d*) *Simpler images*.—The images mentioned above are so complex that people of inferior mental powers

cannot grasp their meaning. Such people must be provided with simpler symbols, of which two specimens used by Śaivites are given below.

One of these is the trident. Its three branches represent the five gifts of God, two branches representing two each and the third representing one. The main part of it symbolizes God Himself. This is a very simple image both for external worship and for mental worship. The second is the sacred ashes. This represents the love of God. Fire has burnt cow dung, removed its impurities, and has changed it to a beautiful form. So the Love of God nullifies the power of Anava and makes the soul divine. When a worshipper wears sacred ashes on the forehead, he must feel that the Love of God is on him, and cultivate the habit of avoiding deeds that are unworthy of one who wears the Love of God. Besides, as he puts on the ashes he repeats songs in praise of the Love of God, which heighten the feeling.

### *The Suggestive Nature of Images*

In the image of Natarája, the first hand tells the worshipper that God has given him his body and habitation for his benefit, and that he should make the best use of them and of his time. He must use them in the service of God and not in securing fleeting and harmful pleasures of the senses. The second hand is the hand of hope, indicating that man need not fear anything but should work for his salvation. The third hand warns him of the uncertainty of his life in this world,

that the body may perish at any time, and that he should not postpone his useful activities but work while he may. The foot that rests on the dwarf wants the worshipper to imitate it and crush with his wisdom the Anavic influence and all the wrong desires created by it. The fourth hand and the uplifted foot show his destination of infinite bliss. The smile engenders love for God, and the three eyes exhort the worshipper to think correctly, desire correctly, and act correctly. The eye on the forehead particularly condemns wrong desires. This image is a perpetual sermon, initiates religious contemplation, and serves as a suitable object of long and continued adoration. It attunes the mind to God and attaches it to Him. The mind is then filled with the thought of God, and the body influenced by the mind becomes the tool of God. The tongue sings praises of God, the body prostrates before Him, and the mind goes into ecstasy at the thought of Him. The man loses his individuality and is possessed by God.

APPENDIX B

# MANTRAS

## *Observances of the First Stage (Charya)*

The Mantras are formulas embodying vital truths in a condensed form. The simplest of these is AUM, composed of three elementary sounds A, U, M, with a continuation of the last sound. The continuation is split into two subtle sounds. These five sounds represent God, God's Love which gives true knowledge,* the soul, God's Love which causes evolution,† and Anava. The same five things are represented by another Mantra consisting of five distinct letters. Each of these Mantras is called Panchakshara (lit. five letters).

They are used in two ways. They may be repeated either for contemplation or as accompaniments to some other exercise. The middle letter represents the soul and each pair of letters on either side represents the things to which the soul attaches itself. On its left-hand side are God and the Love of God which gives true knowledge (Parashakti), which are the real goal of the soul and give it endless bliss. On the right-hand side is Anava, with the Love of God that causes evolution (Adi Shakti). When the soul contemplates these five letters, it sees that it cannot but lean towards

* Parashakti.

† Adi Shakti.

the left-hand side and avoid things on the right, the things of the world that bring on endless suffering. The contemplation attaches the soul more and more to God, draws it away from things of the world, and leads it to truth, goodness, and bliss. The more often these formulas are contemplated in the right spirit, the more free one is from the deceptive nature of things as presented by the senses. The thought of God will dominate the mind, and all the things in the world will more and more reflect God.

Besides these two formulas or Mantras, there are eleven Mantras which serve a great many purposes. These indicate the various parts of an image of God which is used for the purpose of contemplation. The first five stand for the five faces of the image representing the love of God which confers on souls the five gifts of spiritual illumination, suppression of Anava, destruction, sustenance of life, and creation. The remaining six stand respectively for his heart, head, hair, clothing, eyes, and weapon, which symbolize His being the great reality, His perfection, His winning over the souls, His protecting them, His being the origin of the universe, and His power of dispelling ignorance.

They are also used to make the body manifest the divinity that is in it. Though the body is made of products of Maya, it is quickened by the Love of God, and is therefore essentially and potentially divine. Men of the Charya stage have known this truth, and the association of the Mantras with the various parts of the body brings home to them this truth and makes

them regard their bodies as really divine. The worshipper associates the five fingers with the first five Mantras and the palm with the Panchaksharam. The hand is thus regarded as divine and is fit for divine service. He then consecrates his heart and then other parts of the body with the appropriate Mantras. His body has thus assumed a divine form.

The mind and body are further purified by the application of sacred ashes with appropriate Mantras to sixteen parts of the body, and by various other means. The worshipper then practises control of breath, which is believed to aid concentration of mind. With these preliminary aids, he begins the worship of God. There are several elements in the systematic worship of God, of which bathing the image and offering flowers are the chief. The water in which he bathes the image is love, and the eight kinds of flowers which he offers represent non-injury, control of the senses, forbearance, sympathy, love, truth, spiritual contemplation, and service. When the worship is over he surrenders himself to God.




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